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Reference	IOR/R/15/5/60
Title	'File XXII 4 Koweit relations with Bahrain.'
Date(s)	7 Mar 1906-14 May 1920 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English and Arabic in Latin and Arabic script
Extent and Format	1 volume (53 folios)
Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
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About this record

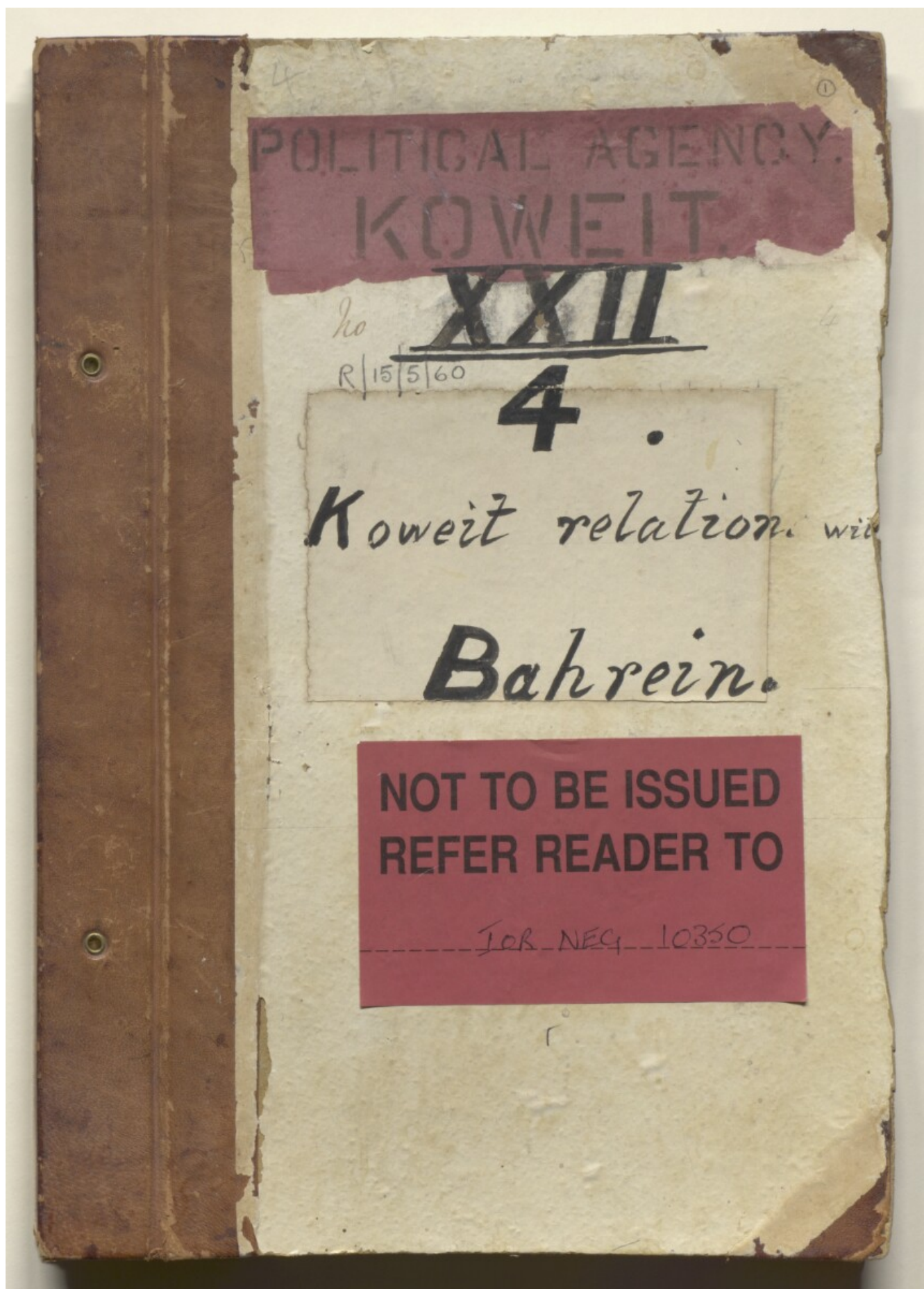
The volume comprises telegrams, despatches, correspondence, memoranda, and notes relating to Kuwaiti relations with Bahrain from 1906 to 1920.

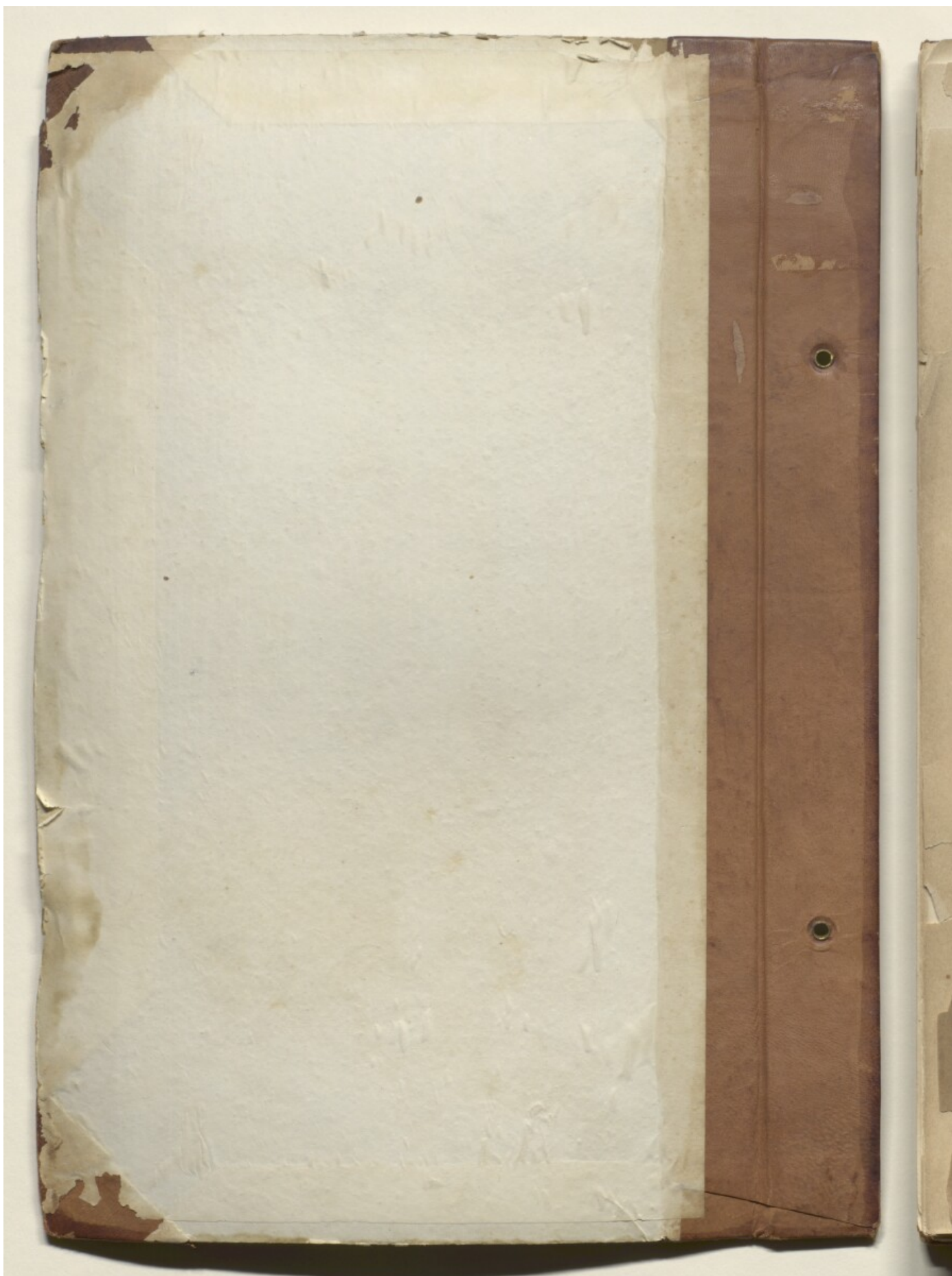
The discussion in the volume relates to:

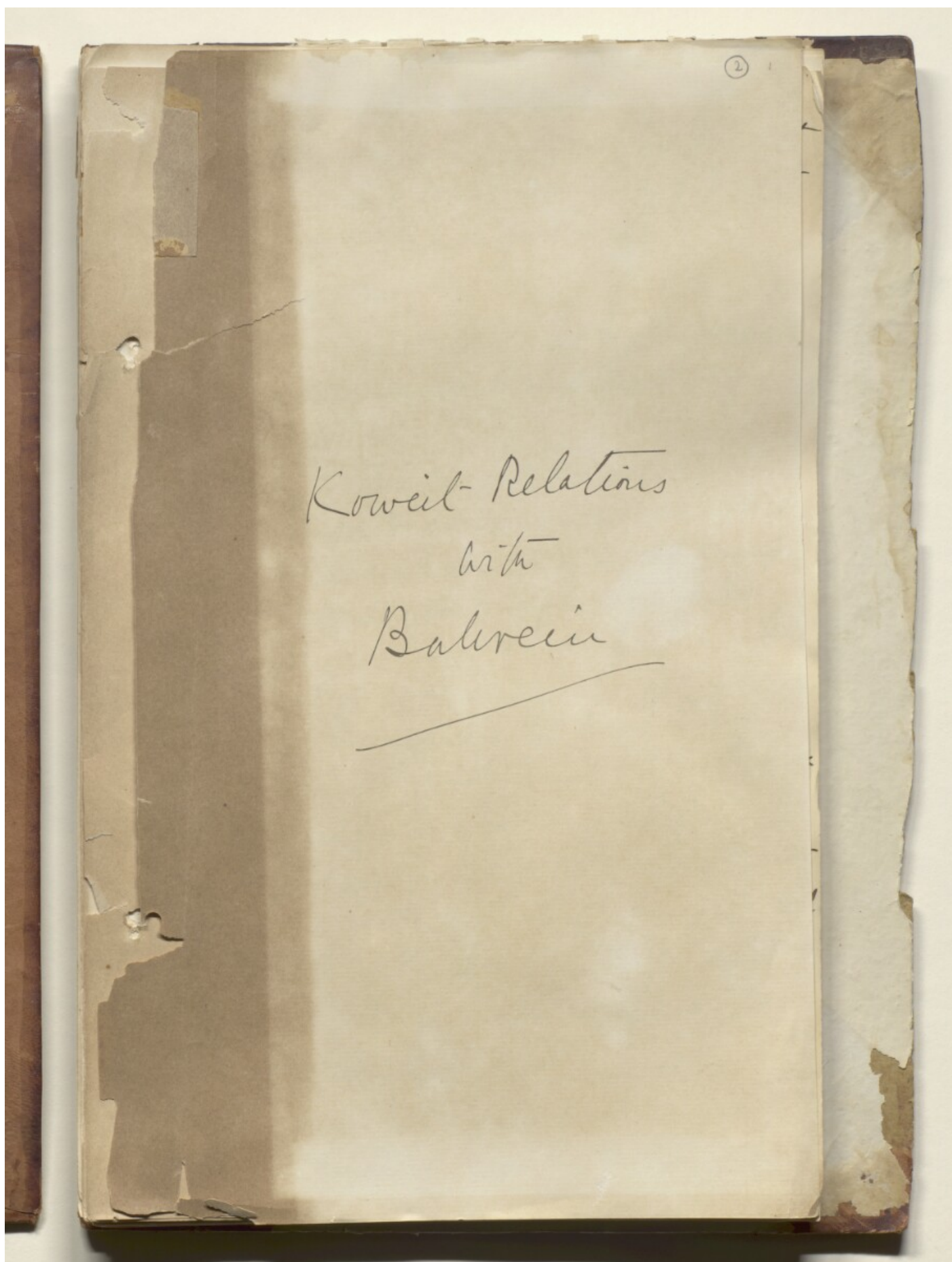
- a note of a conversation between the Resident and Shaikh Mubarak [Shaikh Mubārak bin Ṣabāḥ Āl Ṣabāḥ] of Kuwait concerning Nasir bin Mobarak bin al Khalifa the 'outlaw relative' of Shaikh Isa of Bahrain [Shaikh 'Īsá bin 'Alī Āl Khalīfah];
- reported expulsion of Jews from Bahrain;
- Bahraini political exiles;
- Shaikh Mubarak's visit to Bahrain, 1911;
- A note by Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, Arnold Talbot Wilson, entitled 'Note on History of Zubara and Claims of Shaikh of Bahrein to Zubara', which includes (folio 44) a small sketch map illustrating the remarks in this note.

Included in the volume (folios 33-34) is a copy in Arabic and English translation of the letter of Nasir bin Mobarak bin al-Khalifa, Chief of the Al Abdullah branch of the Al Khalifa family of Bahrain to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. Also included is a map (folio 44) prepared by the Acting Civil Commissioner for Mesopotamia, Arnold Talbot Wilson, to illustrate his 'Note on History of Zubara and Claims of Shaikh of Bahrein to Zubara'.

The principal correspondents in the volume include: the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Percy Zachariah Cox and later, Francis Beville Prideaux; the Political Agent, Kuwait, Stuart George Knox; the Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, Arnold Talbot Wilson; the Political Agent, Bahrain, David Lockhart Robertson Lorimer.











Extract from note
on conversation between the Resident
Pruelue & Sheikh Mobarak of Koweit
on the 7th March 1906.

x x x x

3. Hasir bin Mobarak bin Khalifa,
the outlaw relative of Sheikh Isa of
Bahrain.

His visit to Koweit.

Sheikh Mobarak next mentioned that
Hasir bin Mobarak of the Āl Khalifa
had just been paying him one of his
periodical visits & had only left a couple
of days before.

He continued that Hasir had told
him of his meeting with Captain Prideroux
& had gone on to ask him to put in a
good word for him to the Resident, with
a view to a reconciliation being effected
between himself and Sheikh Isa.

Shaikh Mobarak agreed with
the Resident in thinking that
Sheikh Isa would resent any overtures
on behalf of Hasir bin Mobarak and



that it would be difficult to alter the
latter's circumstances during Sheikh
Isa's lifetime

True copy.

✓

J. M. Cox

This portion of note was written by
Major Cox

R.



Cpl Koweit 3³ ④
3/6/6.
H.B. for letter to
P.R. on same subject
see Armo file.

My dear Prudeaux,

I send you the following bit of news brought to me this morning for what it is worth. My informant adds that this event has given a good lesson to the chief & the inhabitants of Koweit " & is being widely discussed.

2. Sheikh Isa of Bahrain used to collect a tax from the Jew merchants every year but the Jews refused to pay this year, stating that they are no longer under ^{the Sheikh's} ~~Protosh~~ protection but under



British protection. The
Sheikh replied by ordering
all the Jews in Bahrain
to leave within 20 days.
All this is said to have
happened about a fortnight
ago.

Can you spare me time
for a line in reply to say
whether there is any truth
in this story? If you should
hear any rumours about Koweit,
I should be much obliged, if
you would pass them on to
me. It has often occurred
to me that Koweit people
talk more freely about Bahrain
affairs than about their
own & it is possible that
the reverse same thing
happens in Bahrain. I
should be very interested
to know, for instance, what
Muhammad's zakat people
were doing around
El Hassa a fortnight or
more ago.

Yours sincerely
J. K. M.



Busheir 5^③
No 1322 of 1906 12-6-06.

Dear Anon - ^{page 3}
Your No of the 3rd
instant. a distorted
version of the case of the
boys at Bahrain has
reached Kuwait - I
have written to them by
the boat so cannot give
you details, but same



6
little time ago Sheikh
I threatened to turn
the Jews out of Bahrain,
they appealed to Pasha
for assistance, which
he gave to the best of
his power.

So far they have
not been turned
out of Bahrain, &



little time ago Sheikh
Ibrahim threatened to turn
the Jews out of Bahrain,
they appealed to Pasha
for assistance, which
he gave to the best of
his power.

So far they have
not been turned
out of Bahrain, &

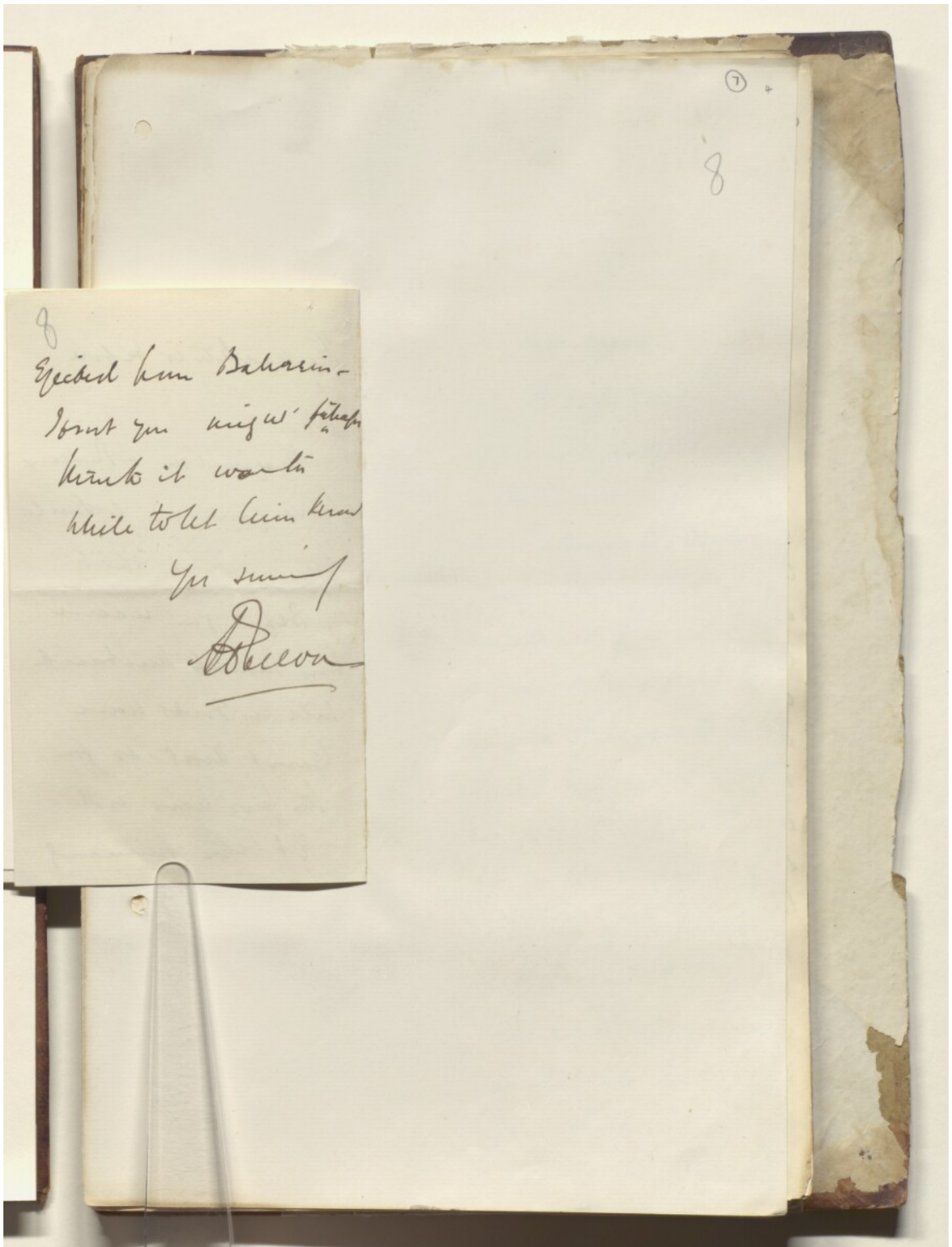
the matter is before
Court. ^⑥

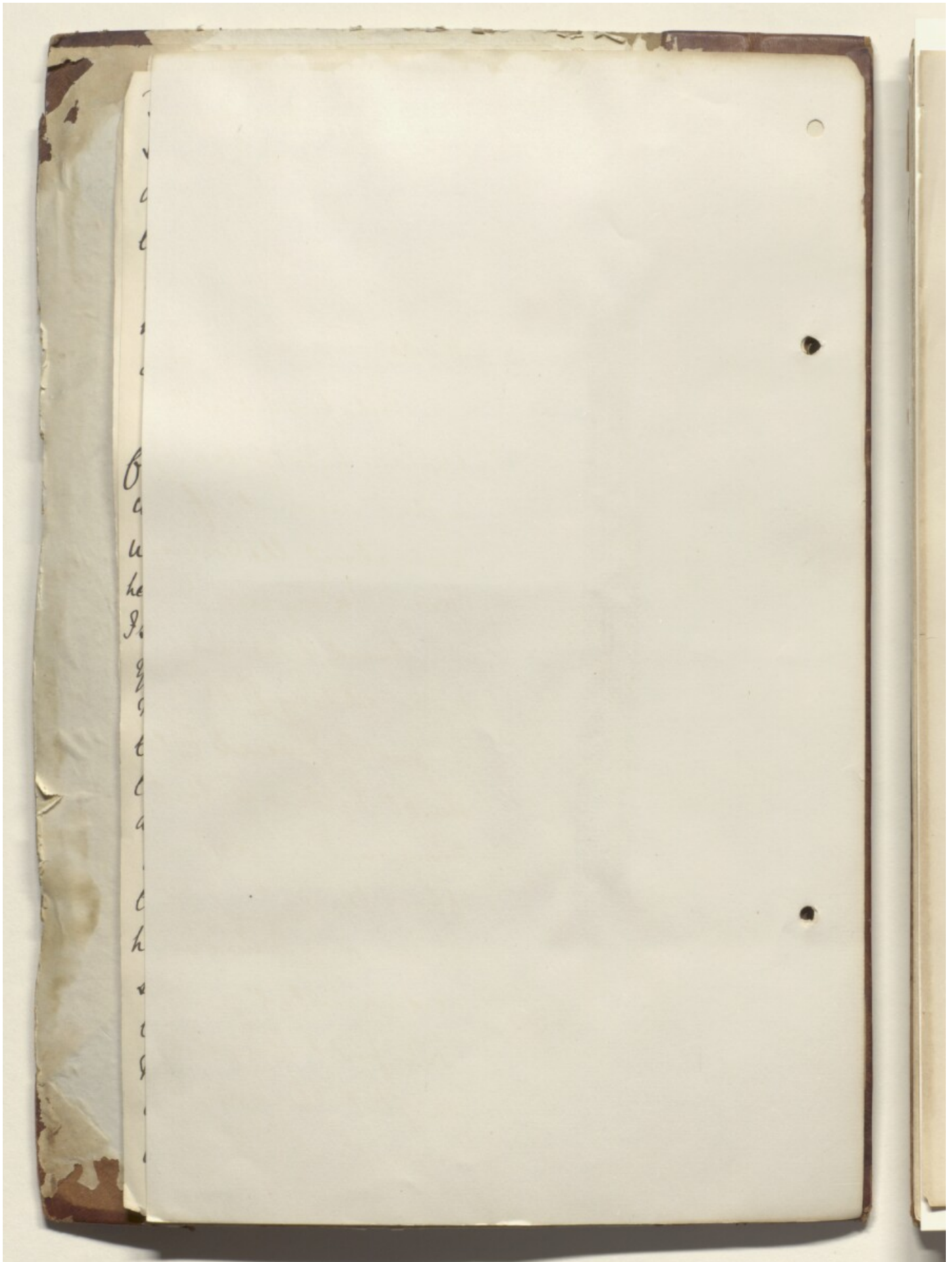
Majid bin Abdullah
have gone up to Shiraz
for a short while.

Before you receive
this Sheikh Ibrahim
will no doubt have
learned that so far
the Jews have not
yet been humiliated



8
Expedit him Bahrain
I want you might perhaps
think it worth
while to let him know
Yrs sincerely
Sheila







Koweit ⁵
15/6/6. ⁸

My dear Trevor,

Perhaps I did not explain myself clearly in that account of mine about the Bahrain Jews. In any case I am afraid it would only be adding fuel to the fire if I were to tell Sheikh Mubarak that throughout P.A.'s good offices the orders of the Sheikh of Bahrain were overruled.

The point of my story was that the Koweit people who, like good



10
Jerusalem, hate Jews worse
than the devil noticed
with distrust & regret
that one result of our
tighter hold over Bahrain
was that the Jews were
getting uppish.

It is just possible that
the Jews were too clever
& Sheikh Isa too disgusted
to let Pridmore know
the facts at the bottom
of the story. In any case
the story & in fact Bahrain
affairs generally are
doing our position harm
in Koweit. No doubt this
is inevitable but if I
show that our P.A. protected
the Jews in what the good
people of Koweit choose
to consider their customary
I shall put the final tag
to the story & prove exactly
what our ill-wishers in
Koweit seek to establish

Yours sincerely
J. H. H.



Bahrain // ⑨
4th Aug. 1906

My dear Knox

your letter of 3rd June about
the Jew business here reached me in
Simla, & I postponed replying until I
knew what Govt's decision on the case
would be.

Some Turkish & Persian Jews came to
Bahrain about 10 years ago. They have never
paid any special taxes here, but when
the first member of their community died
the chief made them purchase a piece of
land at a heavy price, Rs 200, for a
burial-ground. a few months ago, his
servants, who have been tapping every possible
venue for money of late, presented the Jews
with a demand for 4 years arrears of



12
agent claiming that the burial-ground had not been sold but leased at an annual rental of Rs 200 ! The Jews objected, & the chief then opened the ball by addressing me, thus practically recognizing that the Jews were foreigners & entitled to British protection.

He alleged generally that they were law-breakers, making wine secretly & so on, & also said that when they first came here they were only admitted on the distinct understanding that they were to regard themselves exactly like the chief's subjects & be subject to all taxes imposed by the chief on his subjects. The Jews denied these statements & the chief made no attempt to prove them.

I advised the chief to call upon the Jews to prove their foreign nationality before



he did anything else, & told ^{him} 13⁷ (13) that I
 thought those who could do so would
 certainly be given our protection. I also
 told him that if he wished me to
 refer the case to Govt he must give
 me further details in support of his
 case. Then the matter rested for about
 6 months, & then the chiefs Mumshi went
 to the Jews with another demand for 2
 years' rent. The Jews then came to me
 & the chief also sent me a preposterous
 letter to the effect that like "other rulers
 of the world" he too was going to impose
 a special tax on the Jews or else throw
 them out of his territories. I asked him
 to wait till he heard the Residents'
 views, but, instead, he put up a proclamation
 saying that as the Jews had withdrawn
 themselves from his ~~own~~ protection, he forbade



14
his ^{subjects} servants to ~~had~~ any communication with
them or to leave them houses to live in.

The Resident arrived here immediately afterwards
& the chief was made to put up a
notification that his previous Proclamation
was suspended for 3 months. So the matter
stands at present, but Govt have decided
to tell the Sheikh that his action
was improper & that the Jews will
be given our protection if they prove themselves
to be Turkish or Persian subjects

With regard to our interchanging news, I
shall be very glad to let you hear
all that comes to me about Koweit
Hara & Najd, if you will give me the
simila 'qaf' about Bahrain & also Hara &
Najd. I would suggest that we might



15⁸ ⑪

send each other a spare copy of our diaries
each week, & also add a condensed account
of any matters which have been treated
separately by letter or which have not
been considered ~~worth~~ important enough to
report to Bushire.

I enclose a copy of my latest diary,
& also a translation of a letter from
Sheikh Mubarak to our leading Najdi merchant
in Bahrain, which please treat confidentially.

With regard to Sheikh Mubarak's zakat
parties I am told that he sent 300
men some time ago to Rad-ha (not
the extreme north of Hall ^{between Wadi al-Najra}
^{of Jan Shamir} Ridha) which is in [^] about 135 miles N.N.W.
of Hofuf. These collected tribute from all
the 'ajman & Bani Khalid, the majority of whom
sent their instalments to Rad-ha, while those



16
who did not: were visited by the collectors
& were made to pay up in turn.

The Bani Hajir & Al Morra who were
next called upon refused to pay, saying that
though they didn't mind the subsequent
demand of the Turks they feared that
Bin Saud might call upon them to
pay over again & they would have to
comply. ^{a party of} the collecting party then came
down to Ain Dar, in Sauf, about
49 miles N. of Hofuf, & the Bani
Hajir & Al Morra looted their camels
& horses there! The Ajman did not
pay any taxes to the Hasa Govt
last ^{autumn} spring, I am told, & people are
wondering whether the Turks will make



17⁹
⑫
them pay at the commencement
of this winter. Shaikh Humbarak is
said to have guaranteed the apian &
Bani Khalid against reprisals on the
part of the Turks & Bin Saud.

My informant in respect of all
this is an 'ajmi.

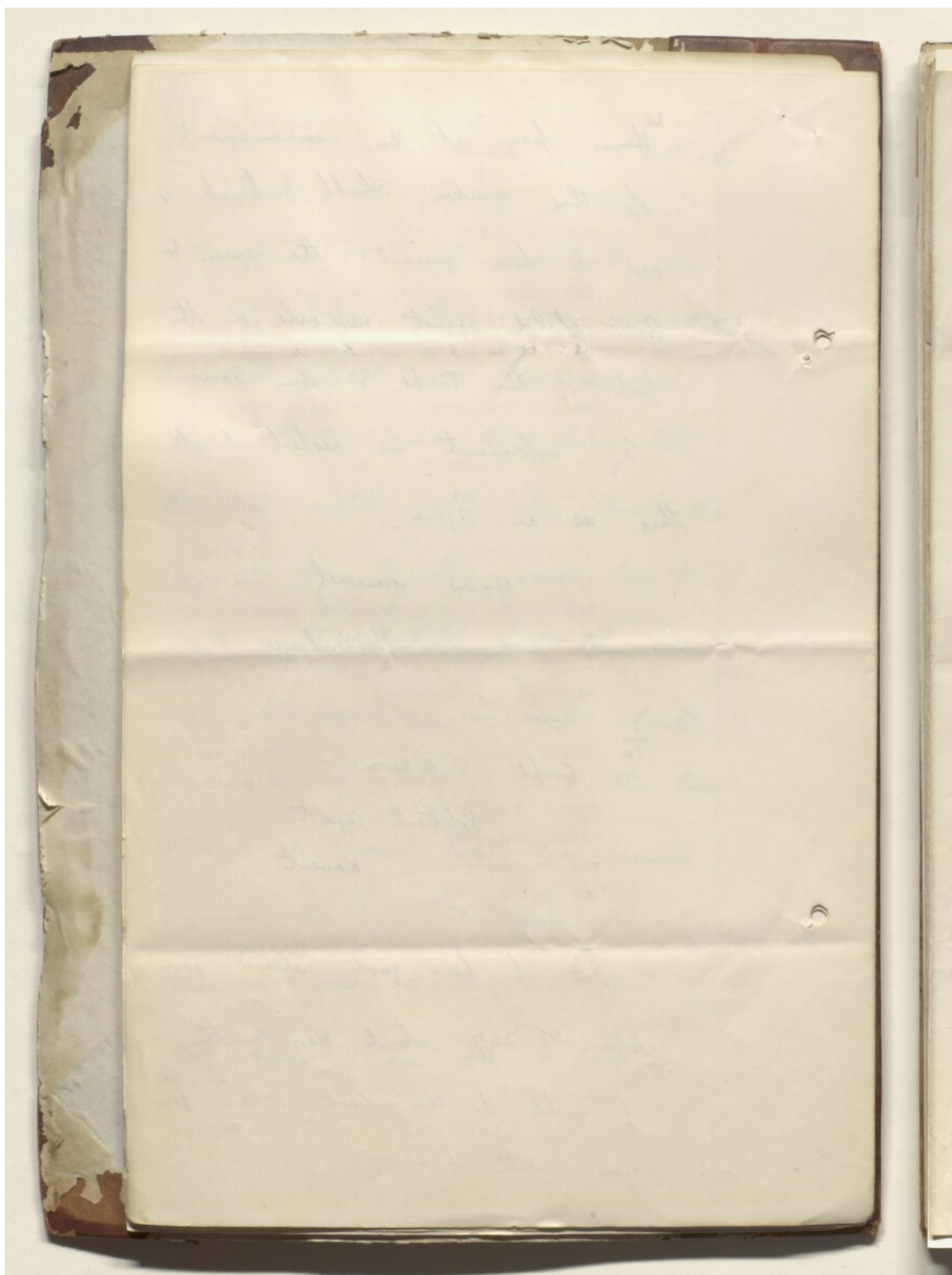
yours sincerely

YBBridaux

To Capt S. G. Knox
Political agent
Koweit.

File XXIII
1
no concern
with this

P.S. I have just received your
letter N^o 267 about Hara matter.
I will do the best I can for
you with pleasure.





Translation

18¹⁰ (B)
end July '06

of a letter from Shaikh Mubarak of Koweit
to Haji Mughil adh Shakair. ^{undated}, but just
received.

you enquire about Salih al Hasan.
When he was with me he was a
man of no count, but considered
himself what he was not (ie a talented
& gifted person). Muhammad son
of Abdoallah al Mahanna was better
than him & more self-possessed &
able, & he was truly a man, & when
they were with me I always put
forward Muhammad as the ^{best}
better man. But I saw the mob
preferred to have Salih (ie as
their chief), and I gave way
to their (ie mob's) wishes which were
commensurate to their senses, in view
of their combination. Since after
God smites them (ie Mahanna family)

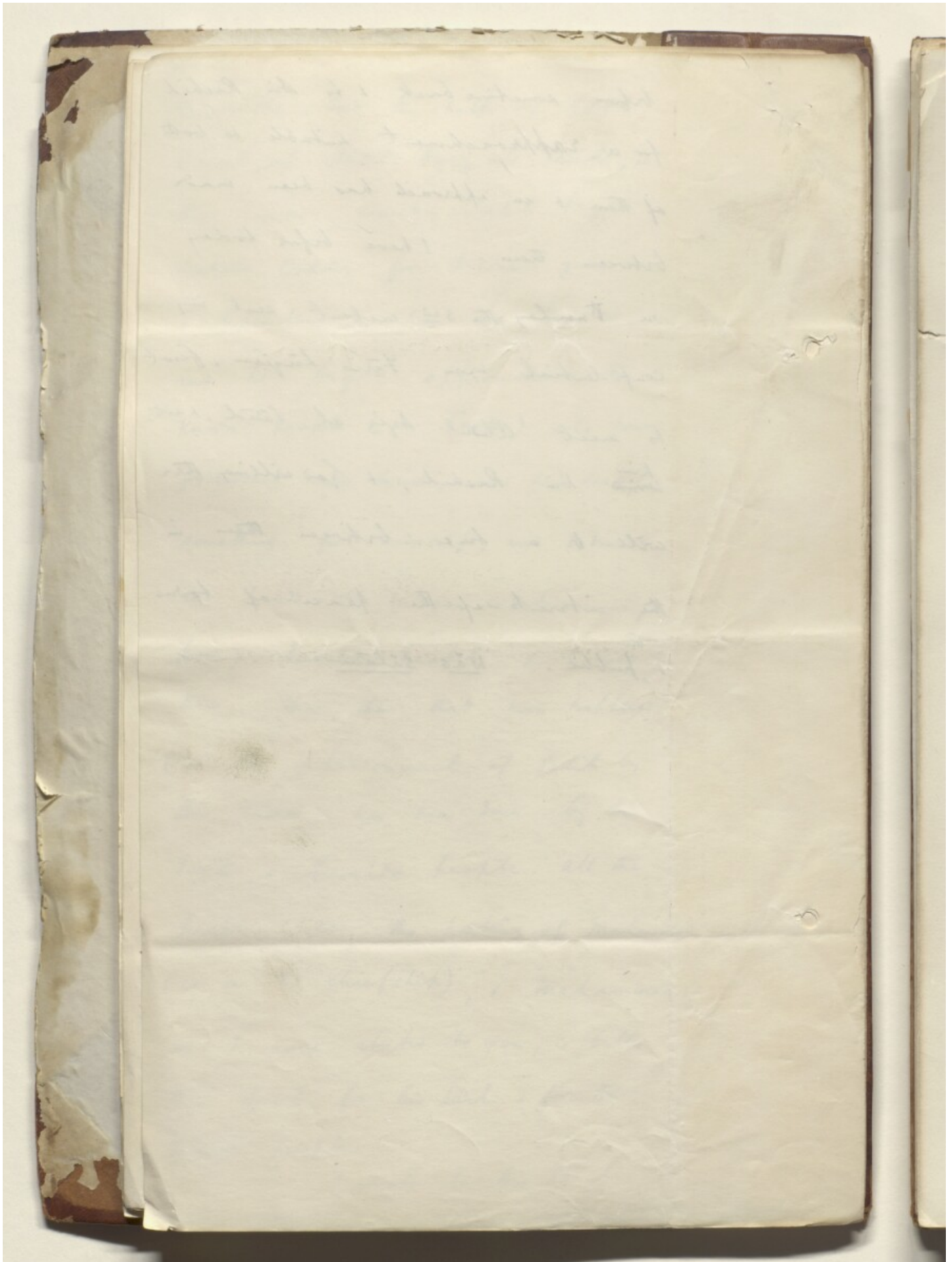


to settle, thro' the help of Lord
 & next of Abdul Aziz al Sāūd, in
 their native country, Salih began
 wishing looking for personal gains
 & depending on his own opinion,
 and he began approaching the
 known people (ie Turks) who have
 garrisons near him, and he desired
 something for himself, and extended
 his hands over (ie began extorting money
 from) Buraida people & pained
 them. This then that has happened
 (ie the imprisonment of Salih by
 Bin Sāūd) has been done by Bin
 Sāūd & Buraida people. all the
 people liked the posting of Mahammed
 (ie on the chiefship), & Mahammed,
 as I have stated to you, is better
 than Salih for Bin Sāūd & for the
 Kasim people.

I wrote to Bin Sāūd



before sometime back & to Bin Rashid
for a rapprochement suitable to both
of them & an approach has been made
between them. I have before today
on Tuesday the 3rd instant sent my
confidential man Fāris Lūjān, first
to meet Abū al Aḥsān al Sāḥib, & after
him ~~him~~ Bin Rashid, & God willing there
will be a truce between them in
the interests of the peace of towns
& ^{the} public. Wāṣ Sāḥib





Confidential.

No. 688 of 1907.

21 15

Office of the Political Agent, Koweit.

Koweit 8th December 1907.

From

Major S.G. Knox, I.A.,
Political Agent, Koweit,

To

Major P.Z. Cox, C.I.B.,
Political Resident in the
Persian Gulf,
Bushire.

Sir,

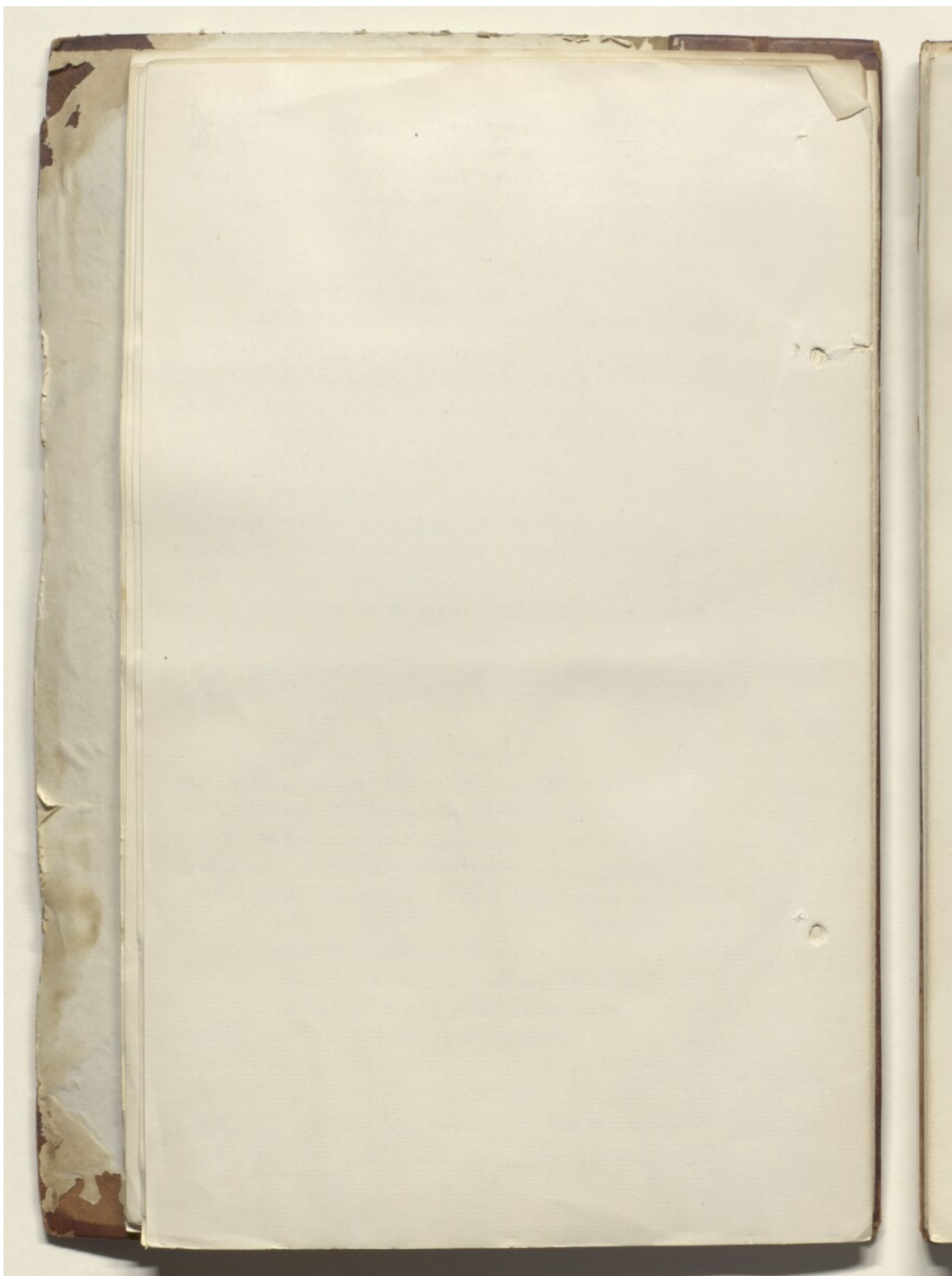
I have the honour to inform you that,
on the evening of the 8th December, I visited Sheikh
Mobarak.

2. In the course of the interview, the
Sheikh turned the conversation on Bahrain affairs and
mentioned that he had been appealed to for assistance
by Sheikh Isa of Bahrain when he was, three years ago, in
difficulties with the British political authorities in
the Persian Gulf.

3. The Sheikh said that he had replied
to Sheikh Isa that the latter was entirely in the wrong
and the British authorities entirely in the right, that
he owed his high position entirely to their support,
and that, if they withdrew their protection from him,
the Bani Hajar would at once destroy the entire family
of Al Khalifa.

4. He said that the only safe course open
for Sheikh Isa was to comply with the demands of the
English Government, which met with the approval of all
sensible and moderate men in general and Sheikh Mobarak
in particular.

5. The Sheikh then informed me that he
had, when you visited Mishrif, last year in company with
H.E. the Naval Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station,





16 13
22

informed you that Ali bin Ahaed Al Khalifa had been constantly writing to Sheikh Mobarak and begging him to support Ali's request for freedom, pardon and permission to return to his own country. The Sheikh said that he understood from you in reply that Sheikh Isa secretly did not favour the release of Ali.

6. The Sheikh then concluded by asking me to submit to you the two letters addressed by Ali bin Ahaed to himself with one enclosure which I have the honour to forward herewith. Sheikh Mobarak carefully abstained from making any recommendation in Ali's favor.

He said again and again that you would know best how to deal with the matter and that he did not want to say anything but I imagine that it may be presumed that he is in no way averse to the release of Ali and would, no doubt, feel flattered if the impression was conveyed that

Sheikh Mobarak had been instrumental in obtaining this favour for Ali from the British Government.

I have the honour to be,

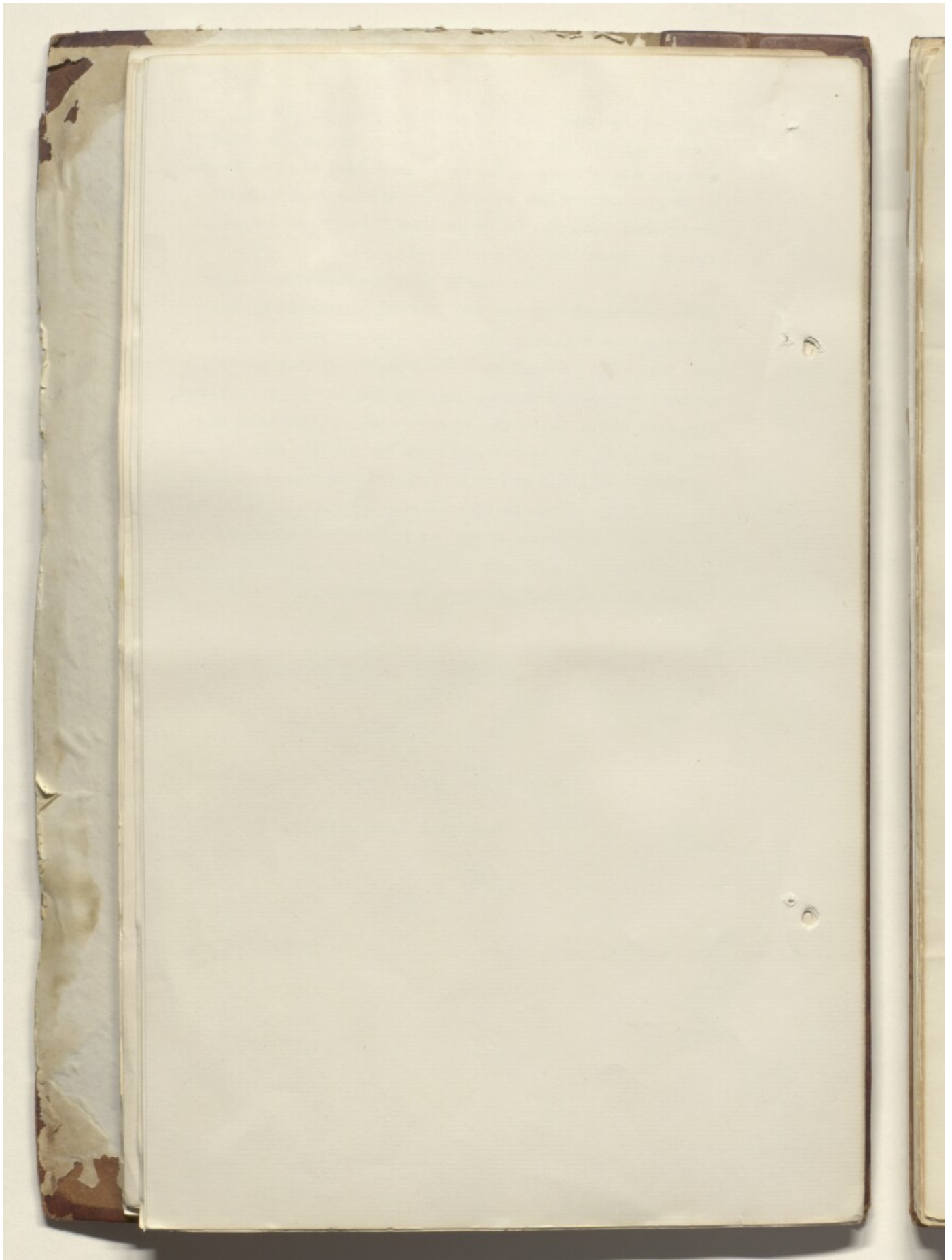
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. M. P. Major,

Political Agent, Koweit.

m. J.





Confidential.

No: 126 of 1908.

British Residency and Consulate-General,

Bushire, 7⁸ January 1908.

To

The Political Agent,
Koweit.

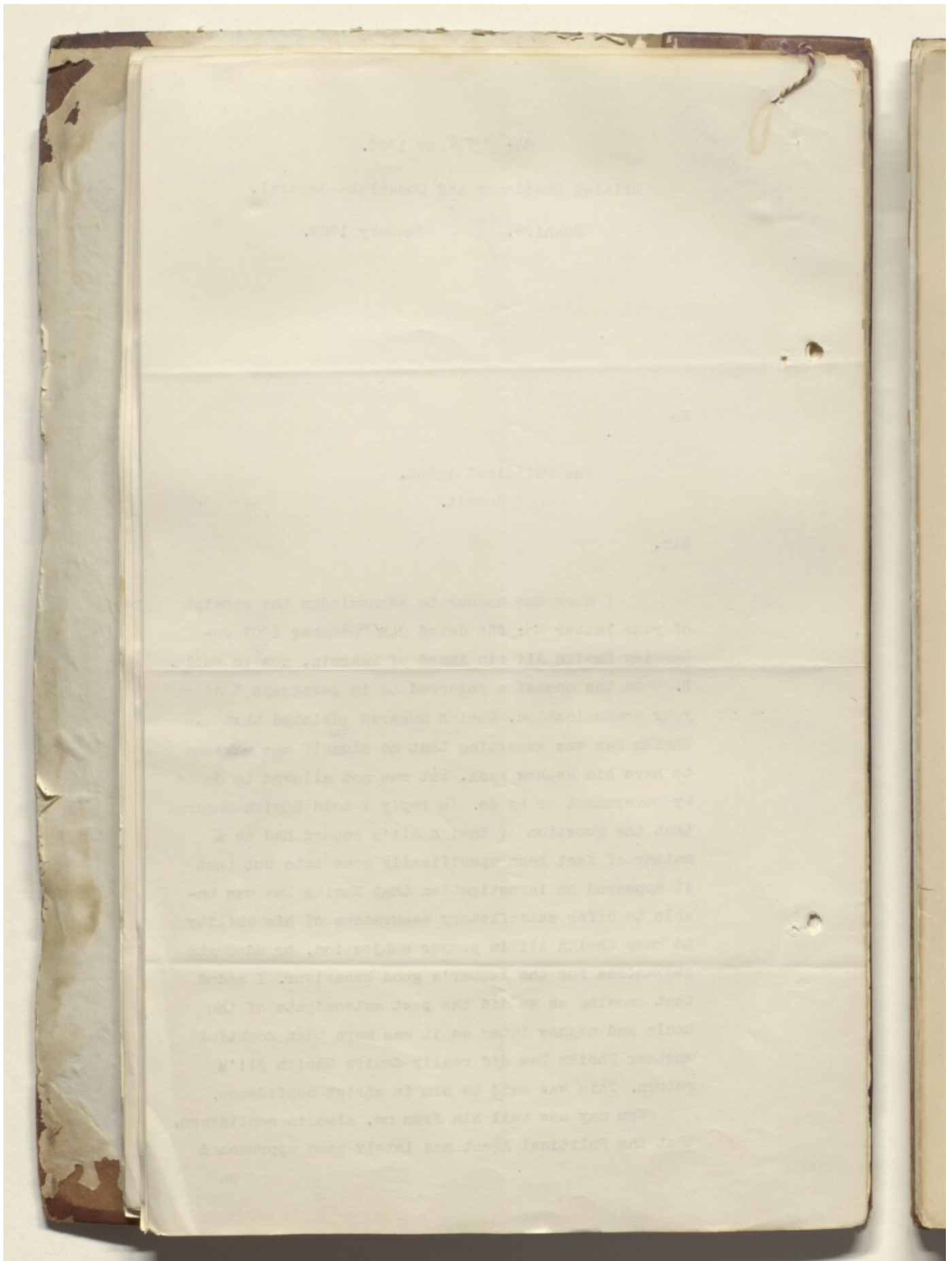
Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No: 655 dated 8th December 1907 regarding Sheikh Ali bin Ahmed of Bahrein, now in exile.

2. On the occasion referred to in paragraph 5 of your communication, Sheikh Mubarek insisted that Sheikh Esa was asserting that he himself was anxious to have his nephew back, but was not allowed to do so by Government or by me. In reply I told Sheikh Mubarek that the question of Sheikh Ali's return had as a matter of fact been specifically gone into but that it appeared on investigation that Sheikh Esa was unable to offer satisfactory assurances of his ability to keep Sheikh Ali in proper subjection, or adequate guarantees for the latter's good behaviour. I added that knowing as we did the past antecedents of the uncle and nephew inter se it was more than doubtful whether Sheikh Esa did really desire Sheikh Ali's return. This was said to him in strict confidence.

You may now tell him from me, also in confidence, that the Political Agent has lately been approached

on.





(1r) 16
24
on the subject by Sheikh Esa and that if such practical proposals are put forward as make it possible to ask Government to reconsider the position, it will be done. You might add that I am always glad to know his (Sheikh Mubarek's) wishes and feelings on subjects in which we are both interested, and that in the present case, if it proves possible to shape matters in the direction which he advocates, I shall count on his co-operation, if I need it, in exacting such effective guarantees both from uncle and nephew as will make it quite sure that Sheikh Ali cannot again give trouble either to Sheikh Esa or ourselves.

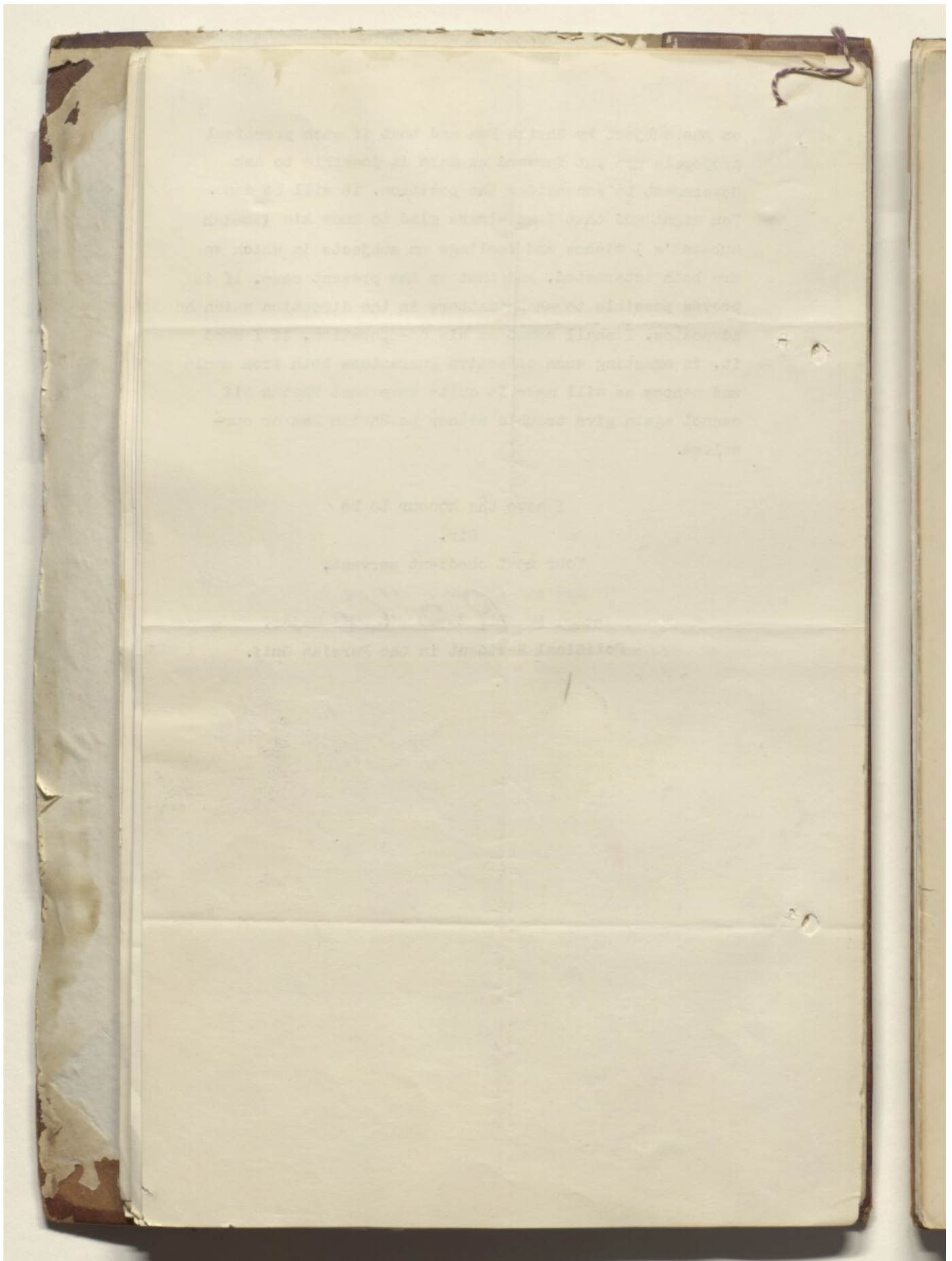
I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

P. 2. Cox Major,

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.



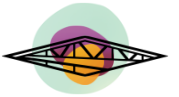


To P.R. ¹⁹ 25
C.H. No. 32 of 1908
22nd Jan: 1908

Sir,

page 23 → I have the honour
to refer to your letter
no. 126. of 7/1/08 &
to inform you that the
message contained in
para: 3 of your letter
was conveyed by me to
Sheikh Inobarak
verbally in the
afternoon of the 21st
instant.

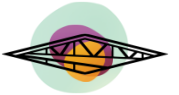
2. The Sheikh
appeared pleased &
honoured by your
confidence & at once



replied that in all ^{2b}
matters affecting the
welfare of subjects
(sic) & especially in this
^{case}
~~matter~~ he placed his
services entirely at
your disposal

I have &c

PK



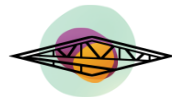
To P.R. ⁽²⁰⁾ 17
Camp Shi'aiba 27
8th February 1908

Confidential No. 1.C.

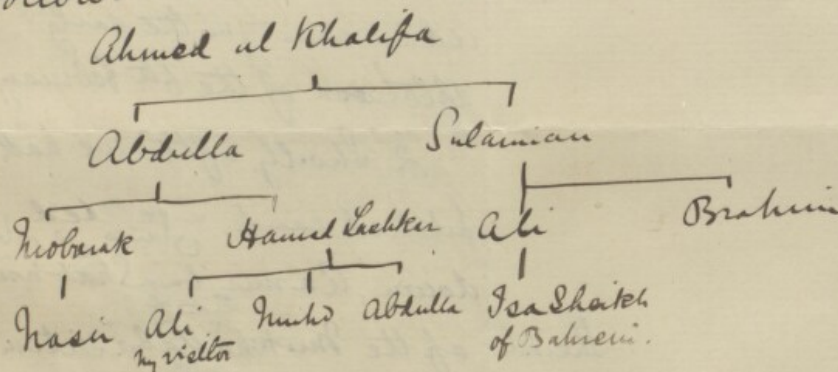
Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived at Shi'aiba village on the Adān coast in the early afternoon of the 6th February.

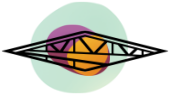
2. Shortly after we had pitched camp & settled down, ^{Amir bin Shab'ān} ^{Sheikh} of the Mutehāttabā section of the Bani Hajjar tribe who has been deputed by Sheikh Mobarak to accompany me to Antā'ā ^{El} village presented himself at my tent & informed me that a member of the Al Khalifa family of Bahrain wished to pay me a visit.



3 I said that I should be very pleased to see him & Amin brought in a tall, rather good looking & well dressed man of between thirty & forty years of age who gave his name as Ali bin Ahmad Lashkar al Khalifa. He is a member of the exiled family of Bahrain & I gather from him that the pedigree is as follows:

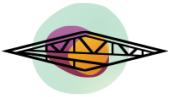


4. At my first interview with him, nothing of importance passed & the talk ran chiefly on my journey to Antaa & my visitor only informed me that he was proceeding to Koweit, especially to see Sheikh Hobank & myself.

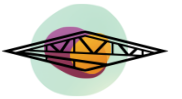


5. When I was over²¹ at
the Bedouni tent before²⁹
dinner, my visitor, who
had already made
himself at home there
as the honoured guest, begged
for a private interview
which I granted him after
dinner. He came with
my Moolla Abdulla bin
Abdul Ilahi but almost
immediately asked me
to order the Moolla to
withdraw as what he
had to say was for my
private ear alone. Later,
when the Moolla had gone,
he begged me to keep
the subject of his interview
a secret even from Sheikh
Moobarak.

6. He then told me
that the present head
of his branch of the
family was Hasei
bin Moobarak al Khalifa



& that the latter had ³⁰
 spoken & written to the
 Consul at Bahrein &
 had received no reply.
 This was last year when
 Captain Prideaux visited
 Katar. Ali bin Hamad
 states that the family
 have no property except
 in Bahrein & that they
 get nothing of any kind
 from the island now.
 Their claim is to $\frac{2}{3}$ rd
 of Bahrein revenues
 of every kind & they state
 that the Ali Sulaiman
 are only entitled to $\frac{1}{3}$ rd.
 In these revenues he
 especially included customs.
 Ali, representing himself
 as on behalf of the family,
 professes that they are
 completely at the disposal
 of Government & are
 prepared to live, either
 in Bahrein or away
 from Bahrein, as the



wisdom of Government
may direct, on the 31st (22)
allowances they claim.
They are also prepared to
guarantee that no damage
will be done by any of
their people either in
Bahrain or elsewhere
if they are treated
suitably. They want
a definite reply one way
or the other & would be
content to surrender
to the British one half of
the Bahrain revenues,
provided the other half
was distributed between
the two branches of the
Al Khalifa family &
they were treated with
equal favour.

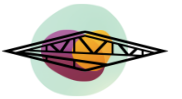
7. Ali added that they
were quite capable of
doing damage both by
sea & land but that they



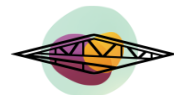
preferred to wait
 submissively relying ³²
 just on God & then on
 Our Government (sic.)
 i.e. the British) praying
 that the former would
 incline the hearts of the
 latter favorably towards
 them, the Ali & Abdulla.

Ali was polite enough
 to say that he hoped I
 would be their friend
 & that the family would
 be bound by any condition
 that I would agree to
 on their behalf & that he
 constituted himself my
 surety to that effect. This
 of course is not to be
 taken seriously.

8. I informed my visitor
 that, while all he had
 told me, would be



daily reported to Bushire, ²⁵
I could not give an ³³
opinion on Bahrain
politics & disputes,
which were beyond my ken.
As, however, I knew
the English way of looking
at things, I might be
able to give him a hint
or two which would be
useful in the event of
future negotiations, ^{if any took place} accordingly,
I advised him strongly to
drop the notion of
surrender of part of
the Bahraini revenues
to the English, for there
was not the slightest chance
of its being accepted & it
would only create a bad
impression. The English
did not want a copper
piece of the Bahraini
revenues; they only



wanted a good strong ³⁴
 Sheikh who would keep
 order in his territories &
 ensure good government,
 peace & plenty. From this
 point of view, it seemed
 to me that the claim to
 $\frac{2}{3}$ rds of the Bahmani revenues
 was out of the question;
 I felt sure that my government
 did not regard the
 Bahmani revenues as the
 purveyance of the Al
 Khalifa family of whatever
 branch. The maintenance
 of peace & order & a
 strong government was
 a matter that required
 a good deal of money
 & would swallow up a
 large portion of the
 Bahmani revenues.
 Isa had been Sheikh
 for many years now &
 presumably my government



Considered him the lawful²¹
 Sheikh of the islands &³⁵
 to perform the duties⁽²⁴⁾
 & discharge the responsibilities
 that my Govt expected of
 & demanded from him
~~it was essential~~ as
 as the return for their
 protection, it was
 essential that he should
 have the line's share
 of the revenues. I advised
 him to think these
 words over while my
 Government was
 considering what he
 had said to me.

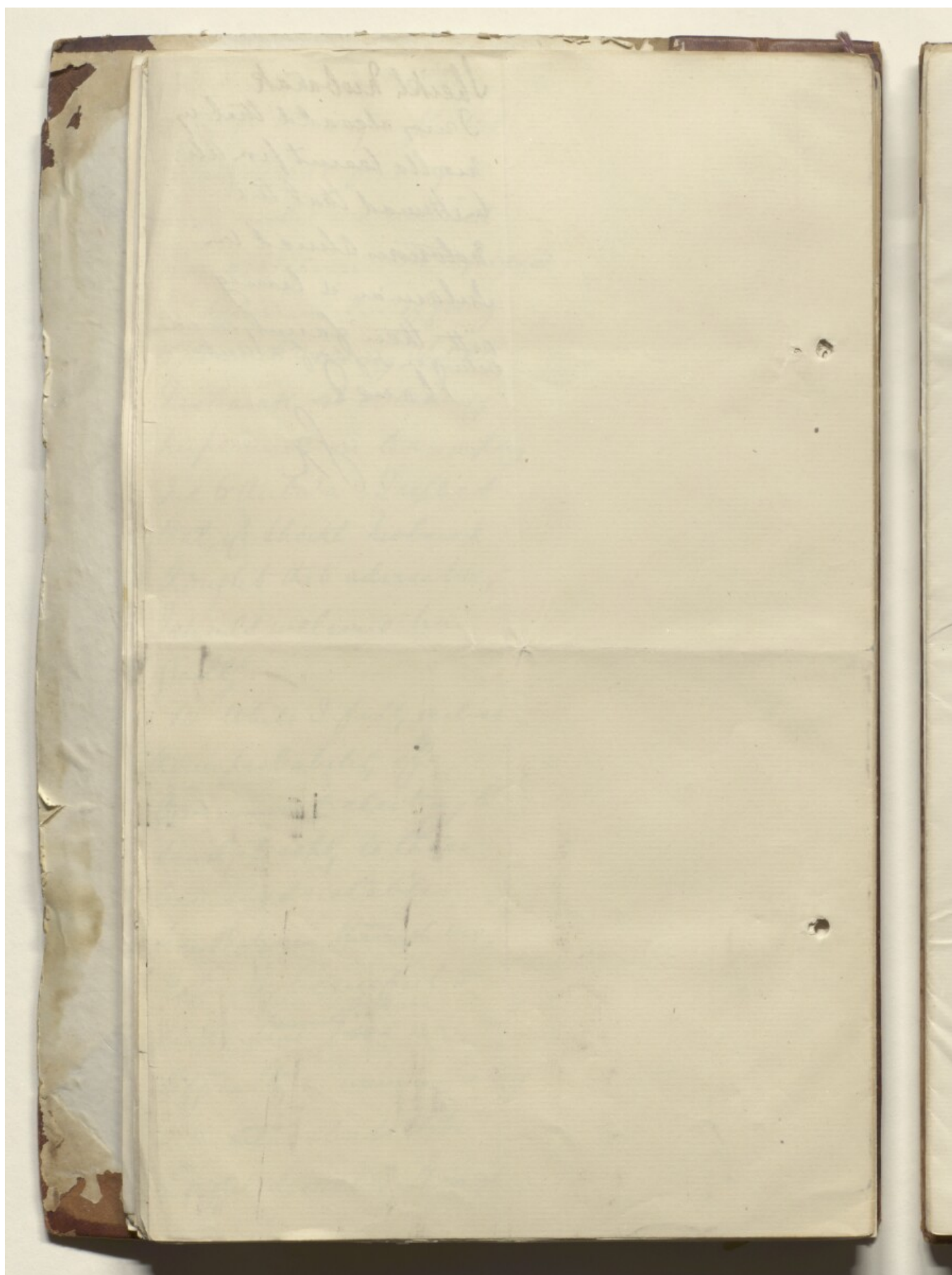
Q. Ali concluded the
 interview by asking me
 for a money gift presumably
 to spend in Koweit. I
 replied that I regretted
 that it was quite out of
 my power to assist him,
 as I brought very little



money with me into the ³⁶ desert, barely sufficient to buy meat for my party until we reached Koweit again. He expressed his determination of going to Koweit, seeing Sheikh Mobarak & obtaining his permission to accompany me to Anta'a. I replied that, if Sheikh Mobarak thought that advisable, I should welcome him gladly.

10. While I fully realise the improbability of Government electing to send its reply to these banished notables from Bahrain through me, it may be useful to state that I ^{forsee} see no difficulty in communicating with them, should it be thought desirable, through

Sh.





No. *955* of 1908.

British Residency and Consulate-General,

Bushire, *24th* March 1908.

To

The Political Agent,
K O W E I T.

Sir,

With reference to your letter No. 1-C dated 8th February 1908 recounting your meeting with one of the Nasir Mubarak branch of the Bahrein family, I have the honour to acquaint you that Nasir Mubarak has repeatedly made overtures for our assistance which has always been refused. I attach copies of the

below (1). Printed papers beginning with My letter No. 30 dated 21st January 1906. (2). Foreign Department No. 989-E.M. dated 2nd March 1906. from which you will see that the Government of India do not propose to intervene.

I suggest your replying in the sense of paragraph ³ of my letter No. 30 dated 21st January 1906 and going on to inform your visitor that by harbouring the outlaw Ahmed bin Selman his family are not going the right way to gain favour with the British Government, and that if their feelings are friendly, the best way of showing it is by effecting the arrest and delivery of the pirate.

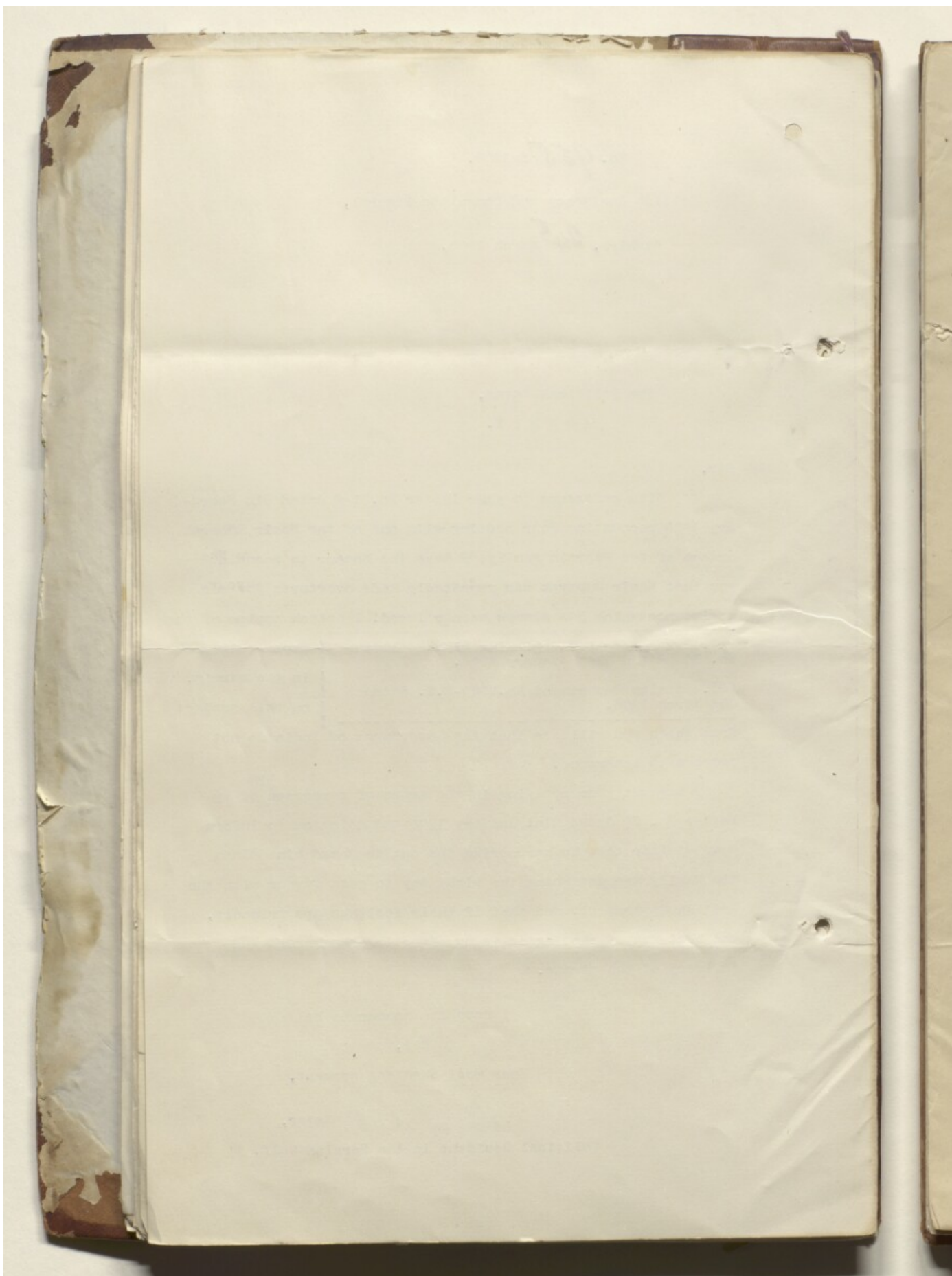
I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

P. Z. Cox Major,

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.





[Confidential.]

No. 30, dated Bushire, the 21st (received 30th) January 1906.

From—MAJOR P. Z. COX, C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

With reference to Foreign Department letter No. 904-E., dated 7th May 1903, I have the honour to forward, for the consideration of the Government No. 456, dated 22nd December 1905, with of India, copy of a communication received from the Political Agent at Bahrein, which gives cover to a representation from Sheikh Esa's outlawed cousin Nasir bin Mubarak, begging that the British Government will intervene in order to effect a reconciliation between himself and the Ruler of Bahrein.

For convenience of perusal I have interpolated among the enclosures of Captain Prideaux's report copies of Nasir bin Mubarak's letter to me of 8th May last and of my letter No. 802, dated 13th June, communicating my instructions to the Political Agent in regard thereto.

2. With such an ensanguined basis as it has, I am inclined to think that the hatred which Sheikh Esa bears towards his cousin is too natural and bitter to admit of reasonable hope that any *bona fide* reconciliation is possible between the families during the lifetime of the present Ruler; and that it would save us trouble rather to let matters remain as they are than to take action, which if it had the effect of making way for Nasir's return to Bahrein, would introduce into the principality a probable element of unrest or difficulty which does not now exist.

I have little doubt that any overtures from us in this direction would be unpalatable to Sheikh Esa; still more so would be the necessity for suitable pecuniary allowances which would be an inevitable corollary of such intervention.

3. Primarily, therefore, I would be inclined to suggest that we continue to stand aloof, and inform Nasir bin Mubarak that in view of the past, the Government of India do not consider that they have sufficient grounds for intervening in order to press a reconciliation upon Sheikh Esa, but that in saying this they wish in no way to discourage him from making such friendly efforts on his own behalf to arrive at a reconciliation with his cousin as may seem good to him.

4. If, however, in view of Nasir's friendly meeting and peaceable overtures to Captain Prideaux, the Government of India would prefer to adopt a somewhat more benevolent attitude towards him, I see no great objection to our asking Sheikh Esa if he would be prepared to entertain proposals for reconciliation if made through us. On the whole, however, I am inclined to doubt the practical wisdom of such a course.

Translation of letter from NASIR BIN MUBARAK BIN ABDALLAH AL KHALIFAH, to COLONEL KEMBALL, British Political Resident and Consul-General, Persian Gulf, dated the 3rd Rabial Awal 1323 Hijri (8th May 1905).

I beg to state the following for favour of your kind consideration and reply:—

You are aware that I am of the Al Abdallah, and it is a matter of common knowledge that I have landed interests in Bahrein. The Turkish Government approached me, years ago, with the request that I should sell to them my rights in Bahrein, but that could not be arranged. Afterwards I thought that I should assail Bahrein, and decide by force of arms as to whose is the right of Sovereignty in Bahrein.

But now since I am assured that Bahrein has come under British protection, and I respect British Authority. I have said truce to all thoughts of assailing Bahrein. Sheikh Esa has all this time been appropriating to himself



40
2

the revenues of the Island. I submit that he has no right, and especially to usurp my right over half of Bahrain.

I now beg to say that since your Government is a Government of Justice, and since I am an injured person, you should do me justice and have me restored to my rights and privileges. Failing to achieve my object I shall sell all my rights to the Turkish Government.

I hope you will kindly favour me with an early reply.

No. 802, dated the 13th June 1905.

From—MAJOR P. Z. COX, C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,
To—CAPTAIN F. B. PRIDEAUX, I.A., Political Agent, Bahrain.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 189 of 1st June, enclosing translation of a letter from Nasir bin Mubarak, to my address.

2. We can only regard Nasir bin Mubarak as a subject of Sheikh Esa in rebellion, and I think the proper course is to ignore the letter and refuse to hold any communication with the writer except through Sheikh Esa.

In fact, I think it would be worth while your telling Sheikh Esa now that you have had a letter from Nasir expressing a desire to communicate with you, and are ignoring it, and adding that you mention the fact to him in case he can suggest any reason for the rebel writing to you now.

Presumably Sheikh Esa knows his movements.

No. 456, dated Bahrain, the 23rd December 1905.

From—CAPTAIN F. B. PRIDEAUX, I.A., Political Agent, Bahrain,
To—The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

With reference to correspondence ending with your letter No. 802, dated the 13th of June 1905, on the subject of Nasir bin Mubarak, I have the honour to enclose a copy of the letter * which I at once addressed to Sheikh Esa in accordance with your instructions, and a translation of the Chief's reply thereto.

2. In the circumstances, I was much embarrassed last month at unexpectedly meeting Sheikh Nasir in his father-in-law Sheikh Jasim bin Thani's camp at Bu Hasa, as my refusal to listen to him would have certainly annoyed my host. I decided therefore to give Sheikh Nasir some good advice, and I am glad to be able now to forward a translation of a letter, dated the 6th Shawwal 1323 (the 3rd of December 1905), which the refugee has sent to me on the lines I suggested to him. I told Nasir distinctly that there was little chance of Government's pressing Sheikh Esa to allow him to return to Bahrain, but that they would undoubtedly be glad to hear of the reconciliation, if it could be effected, and that submission on his part would at any rate perhaps benefit his descendants after Sheikh Esa's decease. Sheikh Nasir met Sheikh Hamad in Doha a few weeks previous to this conversation, though I am not certain whether the interview was pre-arranged.

3. Sheikh Nasir is exactly the same age as Sheikh Esa, but looks much stronger and younger. It has been our policy always to support Sheikh Esa against Sheikh Nasir after the people had chosen the former for their Chief—Sheikh Esa himself, as well as others, has related to me the story that the Government actually offered Nasir to the people of Bahrain as an alternative ruler—but according to his lights Sheikh Nasir seems to have lived an honourable life, and I do not think that he is altogether undeserving of sympathy.

At the commencement of our interview the Sheikh told me that he only asked the British Government to stand neutral, and he would soon capture the islands: he would guarantee at the same time that no pillaging of private property would occur. I told him that the Government had guaranteed the Ruler of Bahrain against all external enemies and that they would not consent ever again to see the Government of the islands divided into two. I then



3

asked him why he had never taken to pearl-dealing after the example of his father-in-law. On this Sheikh Jasim interposed with the remark that it would not be fitting for a prince to engage in commerce! I have heard the same remark from lesser lights of the family in Bahrain.

5. On my return to Bahrain I explained to Sheikh Esa the awkward circumstances in which I had been placed and told him that I had not in any way sought the interview. I have said nothing about the receipt of the letter since from Sheikh Nasir as there are so many other more pressing matters under discussion with the Chief.

No. 202, dated Bahrain, the 22nd June 1905.

FROM—CAPTAIN F. B. PRIDEAUX, Political Agent, Bahrain,
TO—SHEIKH ESA BIN ALI AL KHALIFA, Chief of Bahrain.

After compliments.—I have the honour to inform you that I have recently received a letter from Nasir bin Mubarak stating that he has something to communicate to me and expressing a wish that I may meet him either in Katar or in Katif.

As Nasir bin Mubarak is your subject and is in rebellion against you, I do not intend to hold any communication with him unless he makes his submission to you. Can you suggest any reason for his writing to me now?

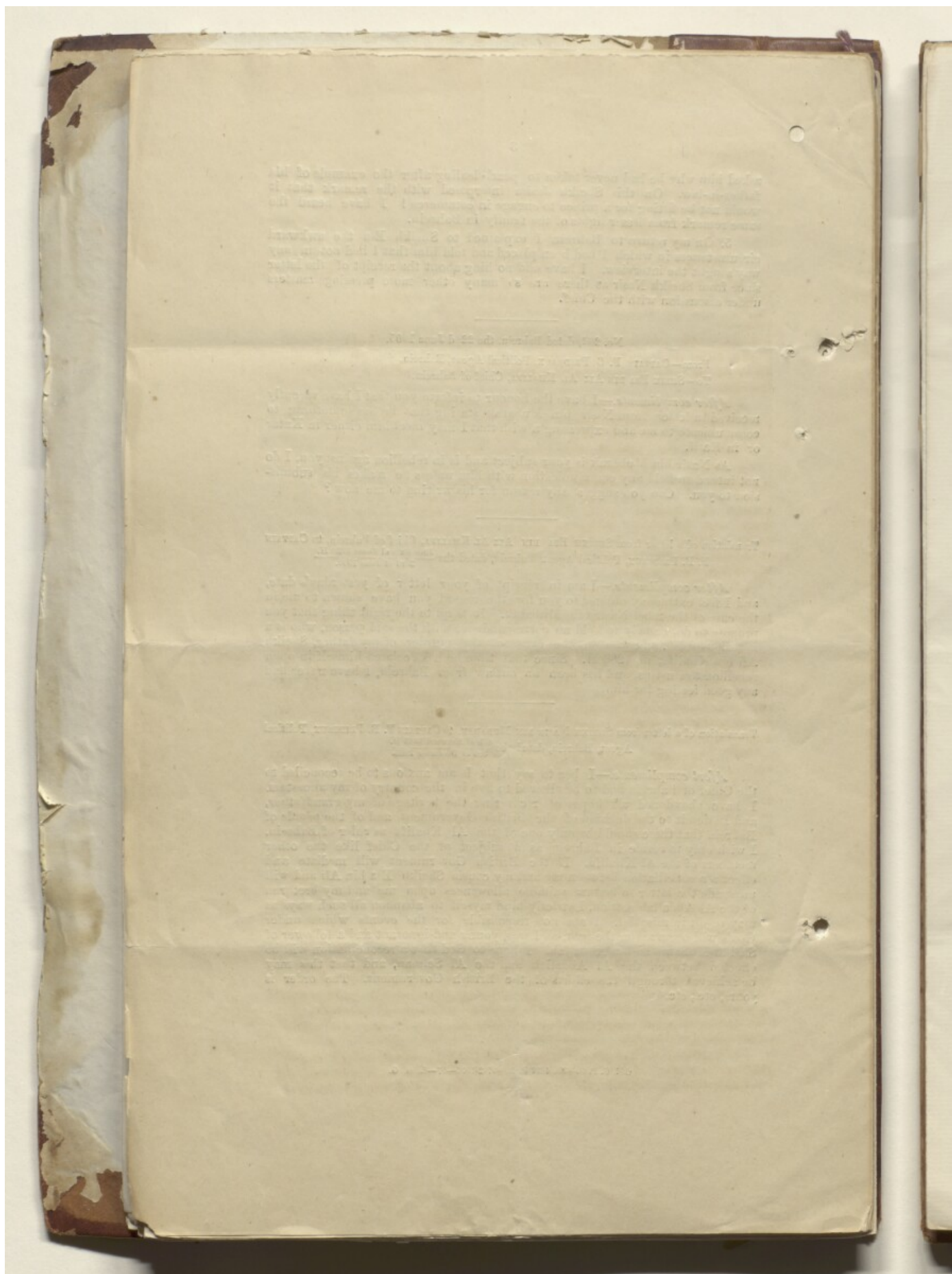
Translation of a letter from SHEIKH ESA BIN ALI AL KHALIFA, Chief of Bahrain, to CAPTAIN F. B. PRIDEAUX, Political Agent, Bahrain, dated the 19th Rabi al Thani 1323 H. 23rd of June 1905.

After compliments.—I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, and I feel extremely obliged to you for the regard you have shown to me in the case of the rebel Nasir bin Mubarak. It is quite the right thing that you propose to do, namely to hold no correspondence with the said person, who is a notorious rebel, and who was the cause of the murder of my father, Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa, in 1286 H. Since that time he has declared himself in open rebellion against us, and has been an outlaw from Bahrain, I have never had any good feeling for him.

Translation of a letter from SHEIKH NASIR BIN MUBARAK, to CAPTAIN F. B. PRIDEAUX, Political Agent, Bahrain, dated the 6th of Shawwal 1323 H. 3rd of December 1905.

Afert compliments.—I beg to say that I am anxious to be reconciled to the Chief of Bahrain and to be allowed to live in the country of my ancestors. I have abandoned all hopes of recovering the heritage of my grandfather, and I submit to the decision of the British Government and of the people of Bahrain that there should be only one of the Al Khalifa as ruler of Bahrain. I wish only to reside in Bahrain as a subject of the Chief like the other members of the Al Khalifa. If the British Government will mediate and effect a reconciliation between me and my cousin Sheikh Esa bin Ali and will persuade the latter to bestow suitable allowances upon me and my brethren of the Al Abdallah section, I strictly bind myself to abandon all such ways as may result in mischief. I am not responsible for the events which under God's will occurred in the past, as I was young and ignorant and a follower of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdallah. I hope to God that a reconciliation will be effected between the Al Abdallah and the Al Selman, and that this may be achieved through the efforts of the British Government. The order is yours, etc., etc.

G. I. C. P. O.—No. 4438 F. D.—17-2-1906—57—L. G. G.



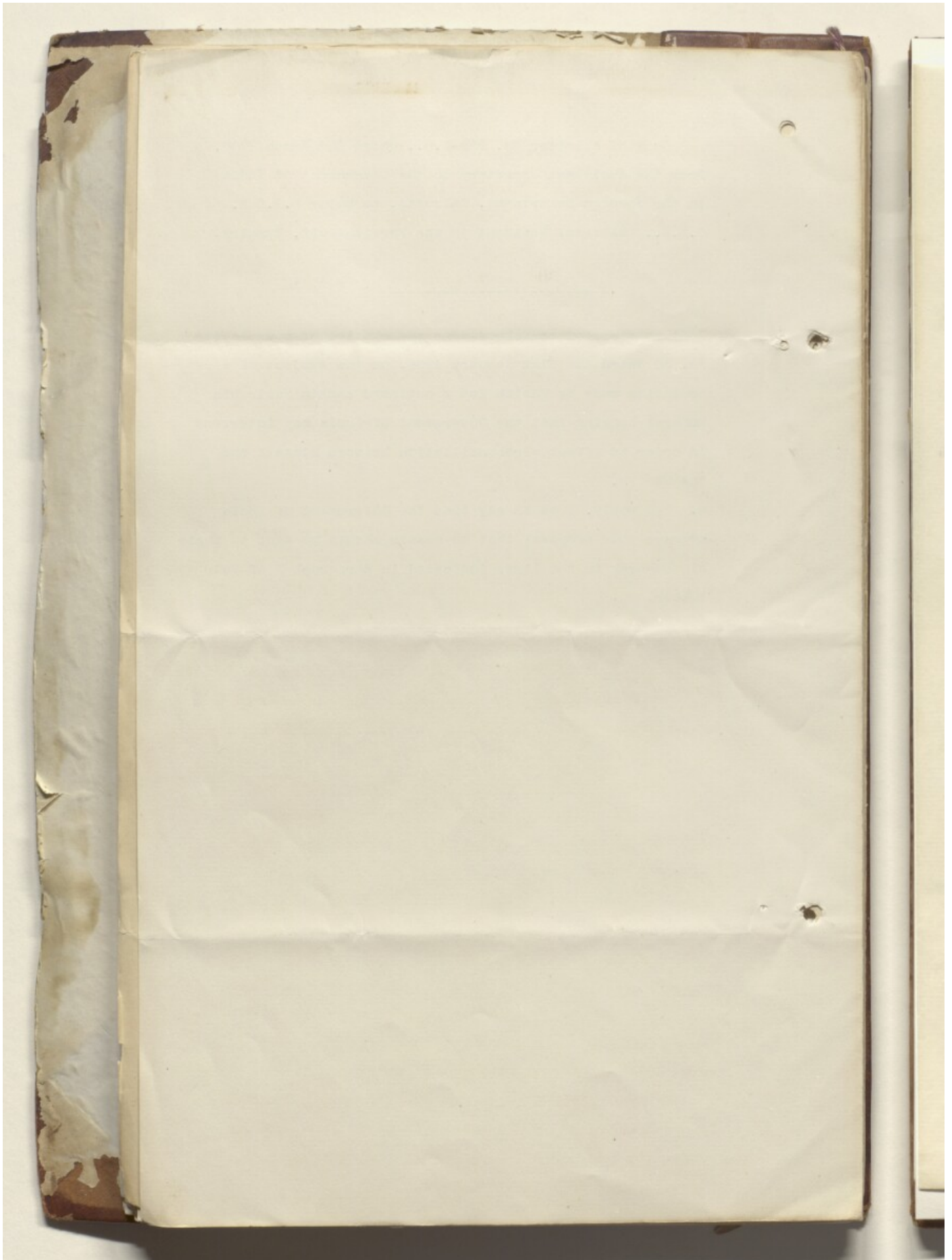


26 (29)
42

Copy of a letter No. 989-E.B., dated 2nd March 1906,
from the Assistant Secretary to the Government of India
in the Foreign Department, Calcutta, to Major P.Z.Cox,
C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter
No. 30 dated the 21st January 1906, on the subject of a repre-
sentation made by Sheikh Esa's outlawed cousin Nasir bin
Mubarek begging that the Government of India may intervene
in order to effect a reconciliation between himself and
the Sheikh.

2. In reply, I am to say that the Government of India
approve your proposal that an answer should be sent to Nasir
bin Mubarek on the lines indicated in paragraph 3 of your
letter.





CONFIDENTIAL

No. 237 of 1908.

27 30
43

Office of the Political Agent, Koweit.

Koweit 13th May 1908.

From

Major S.G. Knox, I.A.,
Political Agent, Koweit,

To

Major P.Z. Cox, C.I.E.,
Political Resident in the
Persian Gulf,
Bushire.

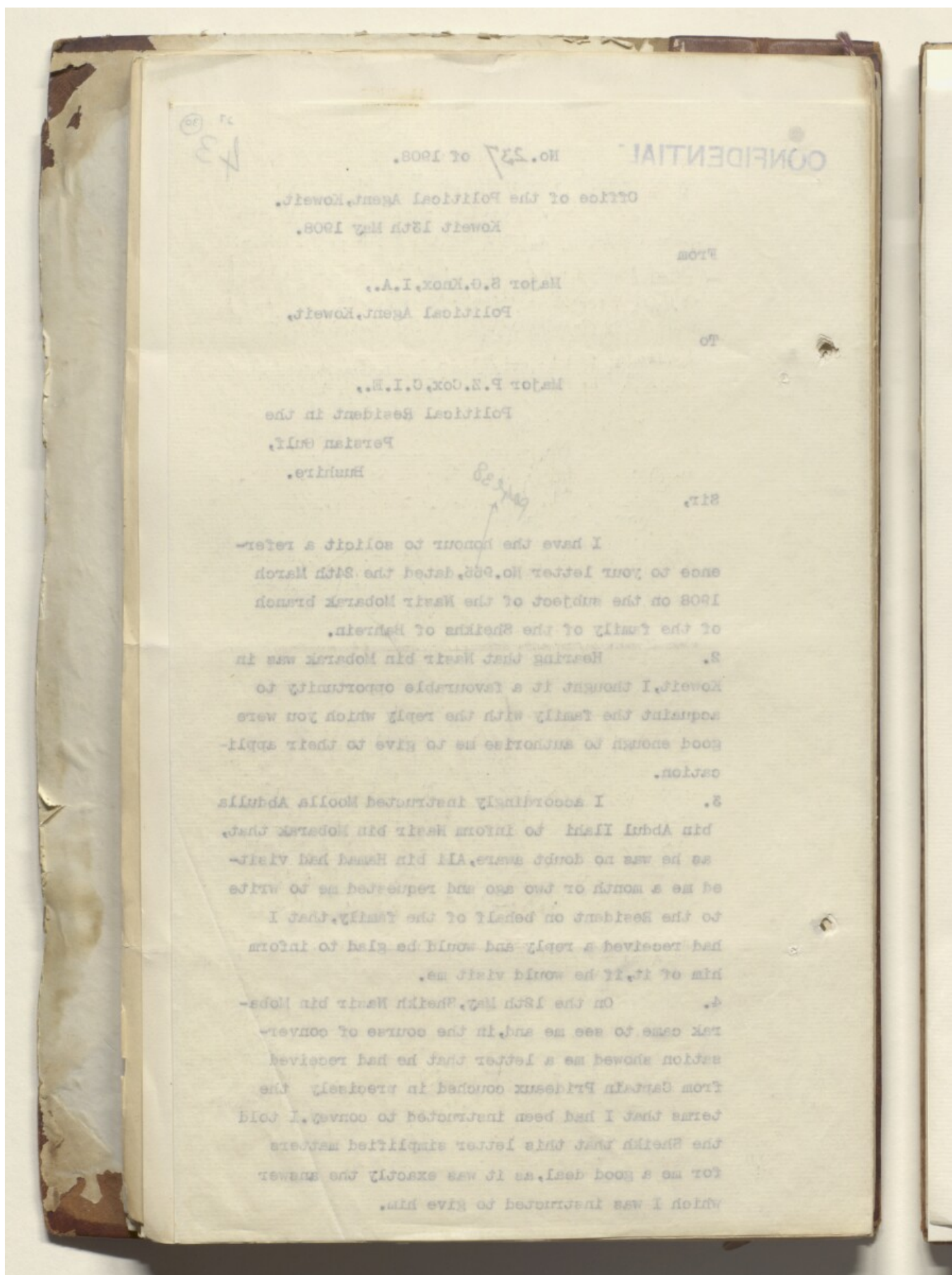
Sir,

I have the honour to solicit a reference to your letter No. 955, dated the 24th March 1908 on the subject of the Nasir Mobarak branch of the family of the Sheikhs of Bahrein.

2. Hearing that Nasir bin Mobarak was in Koweit, I thought it a favourable opportunity to acquaint the family with the reply which you were good enough to authorise me to give to their application.

3. I accordingly instructed Moolla Abdulla bin Abdul Ilahi to inform Nasir bin Mobarak that, as he was no doubt aware, Ali bin Hamad had visited me a month or two ago and requested me to write to the Resident on behalf of the family, that I had received a reply and would be glad to inform him of it, if he would visit me.

4. On the 12th May, Sheikh Nasir bin Mobarak came to see me and, in the course of conversation showed me a letter that he had received from Captain Prideaux couched in precisely the terms that I had been instructed to convey. I told the Sheikh that this letter simplified matters for me a good deal, as it was exactly the answer which I was instructed to give him.





5. I further informed him that it had come to my knowledge during the visit of Ali bin Hamad and I had reported to Government that there was good reason to believe that the notorious outlaw, Ahmed bin Sulaiman, was living in the tents of the Sheikh and that I had been instructed to tell him that he could not give a better proof of the sincerity of his professions of loyalty and attachment to the British Government than by handing over to them this well known offender.

6. Sheikh Nasir bin Mobarak made no attempt to deny that he was in touch with Ahmed bin Sulaiman but declared that, situated as he was, he had no power whatever to do such a thing. He stated that, owing to his negotiations with the British authorities, the allowances that he and his family had been receiving for some years from the Turks had been cut off., that it was with the greatest difficulty that he was able to keep back his own more immediate adherents from making an effort to get back their own or perish in the attempt, as he had nothing to induce them to stay with him, that, however, he felt confident that, if the British Government would step in between himself and Sheikh Isa and give him something even a small portion of the revenues out of which he had been kept for 39 years, he was confident that he could control them and others and keep them out of mischief.

7. As regards the possibility of a reconciliation with Sheikh Isa, he said that he had tried to get both Sheikh Mobarak of Koweit and Sheikh Jasim bin Thani of Katar to intervene but both had replied that they could do nothing. He said that he did not want to live in Bahrein but would live wherever he was directed to do so.



6. I further informed him that it had come to my knowledge during the visit of Ali bin Hamad and I had reported to Government that there was good reason to believe that the notorious outlaw, Ahmed bin Sulaiman, was living in the tents of the Sheikh and that I had been instructed to tell him that he could not give a better proof of the sincerity of his professions of loyalty and affection than to the British Government than by handing over to them this well known offender.

6. Sheikh Nasir bin Mubarak made no attempt to deny that he was in touch with Ahmed bin Sulaiman but declared that, although as he was, he had no power whatever to do such a thing, he stated that, owing to his negotiations with the British authorities, the allegations that he and his family had been receiving for some years from the British had been put off, that as was with the Government differently that he was able to keep back his own more important information from being an effort to get back well out of prison in the attempt, as he had nothing to inform him to stay with him, that, however, he felt confident that, if the British Government could keep in between him, self and Sheikh Isa and give him something, even a small portion of the revenues out of which he had been kept for 20 years, he was confident that he could control them and others and keep them out of mischief.

7. As regards the possibility of a reconciliation with Sheikh Isa, he said that he had failed to get from Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit and Sheikh Isa bin Thani of Qatar to intervene but had said that they could do nothing. He said that he did not want to live in Bahrain but would live wherever he was directed to do so.

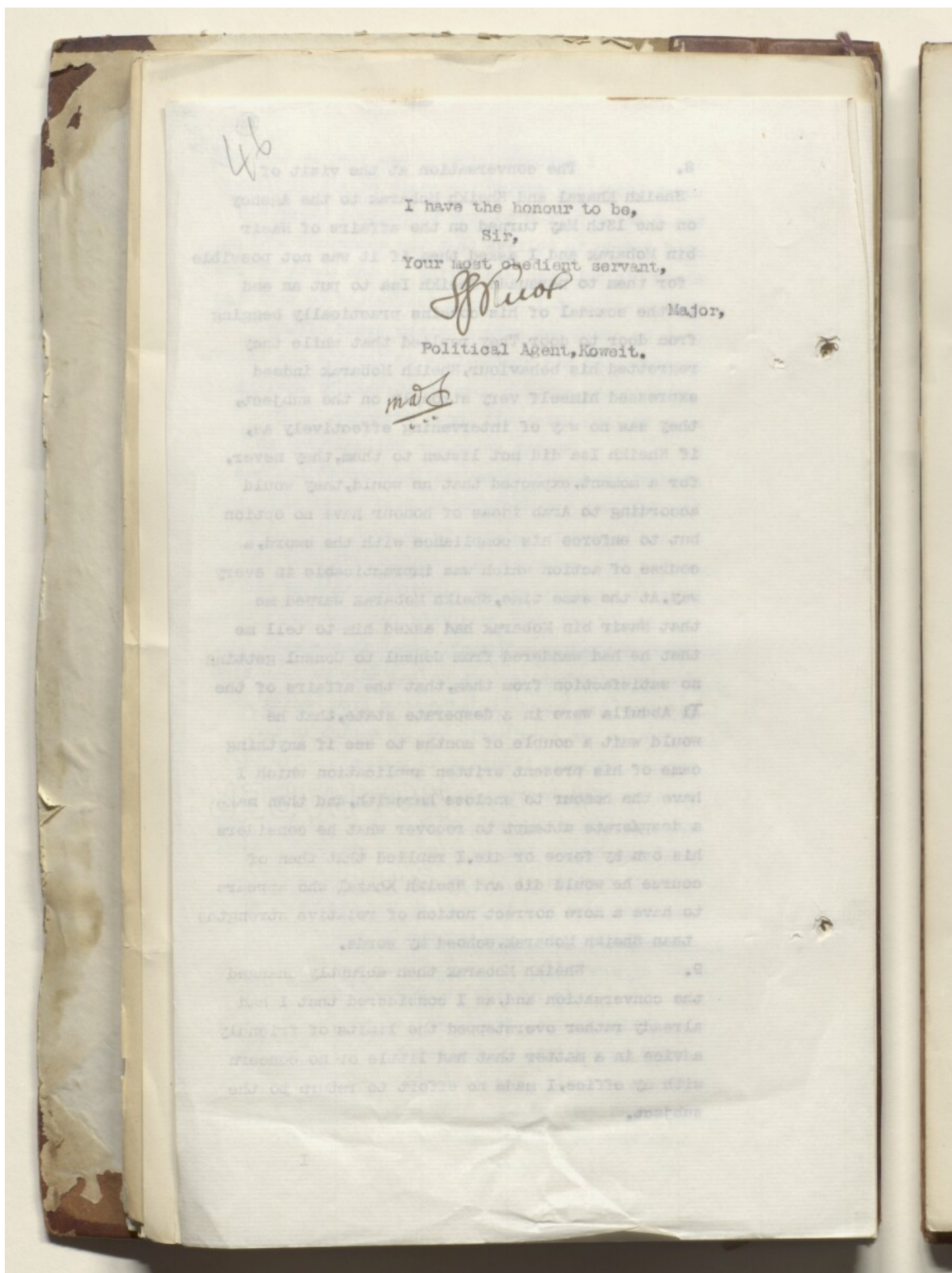


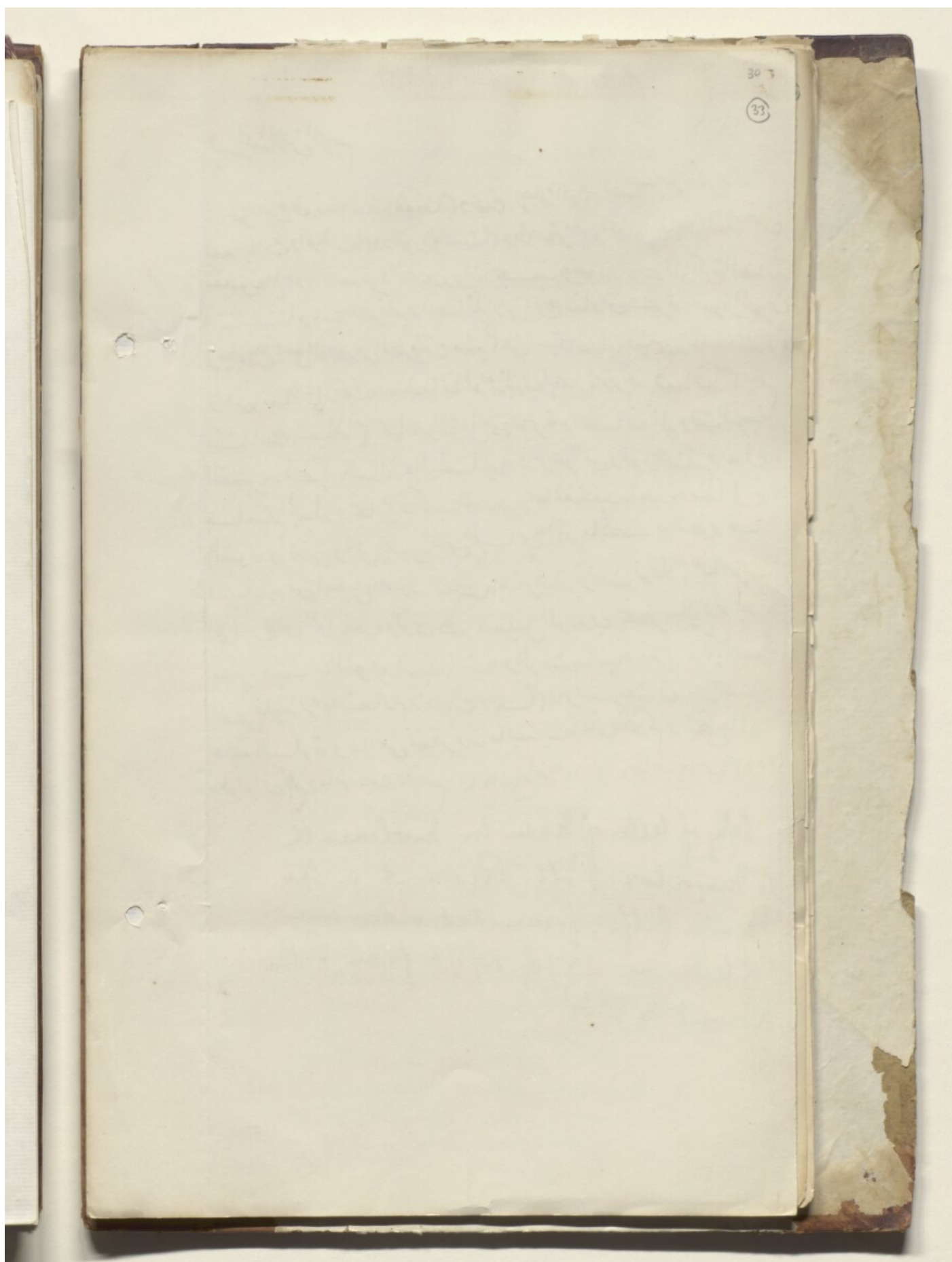
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8. The conversation at the visit of Sheikh Khazal and Sheikh Mobarak to the Agency on the 13th May turned on the affairs of Nasir bin Mobarak and I asked them if it was not possible for them to persuade Sheikh Isa to put an end to the scandal of his cousins practically begging from door to door. They replied that while they regretted his behaviour, Sheikh Mobarak indeed expressed himself very strongly on the subject, they saw no way of intervening effectively as, if Sheikh Isa did not listen to them, they never, for a moment, expected that he would, they would according to Arab ideas of honour have no option but to enforce his compliance with the sword, a course of action which was impracticable in every way. At the same time, Sheikh Mobarak warned me that Nasir bin Mobarak had asked him to tell me that he had wandered from Consul to Consul getting no satisfaction from them, that the affairs of the Al Abdulla were in a desperate state, that he would wait a couple of months to see if anything came of his present written application which I have the honour to enclose herewith, and then make a desperate attempt to recover what he considers his own by force or die. I replied that then of course he would die and Sheikh Khazal who appears to have a more correct notion of relative strengths than Sheikh Mobarak, echoed my words.

9. Sheikh Mobarak then abruptly changed the conversation and, as I considered that I had already rather overstepped the limits of friendly advice in a matter that had little or no concern with my office, I made no effort to return to the subject.

I





Copy of letter of Nasir bin Mubarak
to Major Cox, Poll: Resident in the
Persian Gulf, forwarded under cover
of letter no: 237 dt. 13/5/8 from P.A
Koweit to P.R.



34 48 31

Translation of letter of Nasir bin Mobarak,
Chief of the Al Abdulla branch of the
Al Khalifa family of Bahrein to the Poli-
tical Resident in the Persian Gulf.

In the name of God, the pitiful, the com-
passionate.

To the high presence the first of the
great ones and the pillar of the glorious
and the noble the Sahib Major Cox may be
endure.

After conveying full greetings
and full honour and right and enquiry
after his high position, we are persisting
in the treaty of truth and friendship and
it is in accordance with the presence of
the bonds of the conversation lately
taking place between us and your Presence
and also the repetition of this conver-
sation between us and the Presence of the
Consul of Bahrein that the hope of the
promise of both announcing the gain of
the result of that conversation has not
passed away and we founded on that, are
believing that in the matter which will
be from your Presence there will be ad-
vancement and it will end, please God,
according to desire, as is hoped from the
kindness and justice of the precious
Imperial Government, an example of justice
and humanity., and it is hoped from the
fullness of your effort and the grant of
your precious efforts the speed of that
effort in what justice directs, suitable
for acceptance and approval but let it



Translation of letter of Hadrat Mirza Asadullah Khan
Chief of the Al Khalifa branch of the
Al Khalifa Family of Bahrain to the Poli-
tical Resident in the Persian Gulf.

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most
Merciful.
To the high presence and first of the
great ones and the chief of the glorious
and the noble the British Major Cox may be
salute.

After conveying full greetings
and full honour and trust and anxiety
after his high position, we are delighted
in the treaty of union and friendship and
it is in accordance with the presence of
the bonds of the conversation lately
taking place between us and your presence
and also the repetition of this conver-
sation between us and the presence of the
Council of Bahrain that the hope of the
promise of both announcing the gain of
the result of that conversation has not
passed away and we founded on that, are
believing that in the matter which will
be from your presence there will be ad-
vancement and it will end, please God,
according to desire, as is hoped from the
kindness and justice of the presence
Imperial Government, an example of justice
and humanity, and it is hoped from the
fulness of your effort and the grant of
your previous efforts the speed of that
effort in what justice deserves, suitable
for acceptance and approval but let it



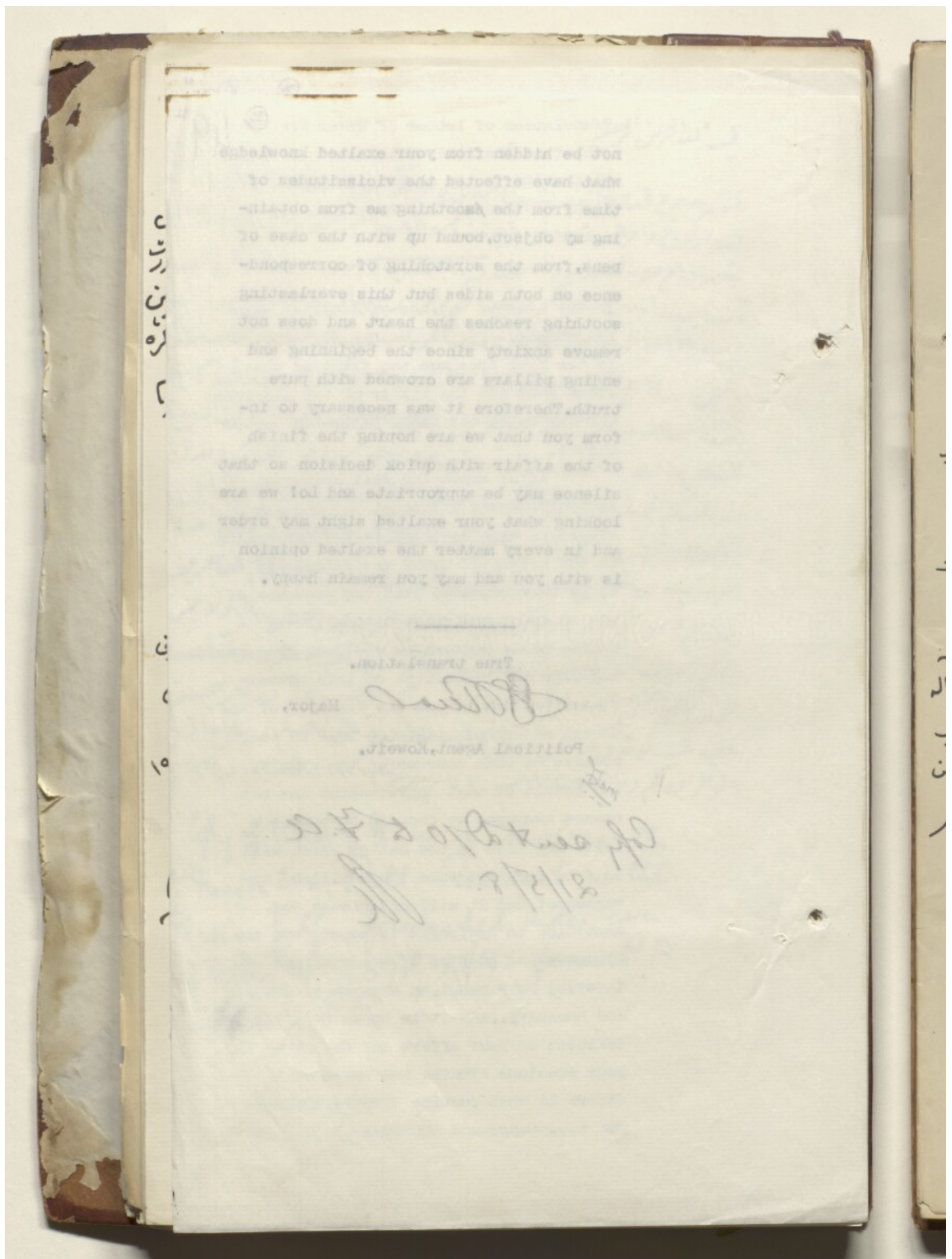
35 49 32
not be hidden from your exalted knowledge
what have effected the vicissitudes of
time from the ~~smoothing~~ me from obtain-
ing my object, bound up with the case of
pens, from the scratching of correspond-
ence on both sides but this everlasting
soothing reaches the heart and does not
remove anxiety since the beginning and
ending pillars are crowned with pure
truth. Therefore it was necessary to in-
form you that we are hoping the finish
of the affair with quick decision so that
silence may be appropriate and Lo! we are
looking what your exalted sight may order
and in every matter the exalted opinion
is with you and may you remain happy.

True translation.

J. M. R. Major,

Political Agent, Koweit.

*copy sent D/10 to F.A.
21/5/8. R*





33
50 (36)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

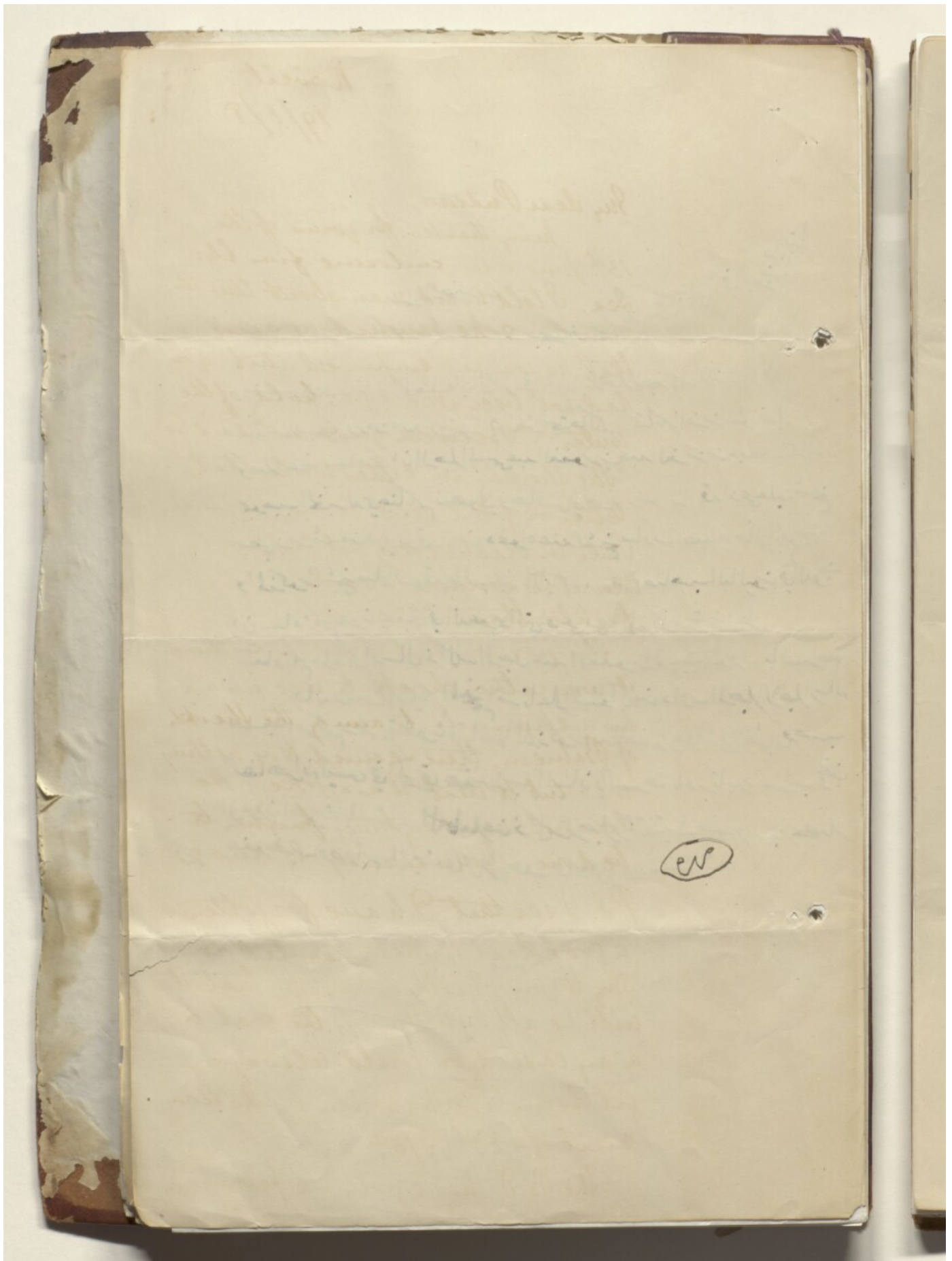
ميجانيف برياريد كرس

حب باليون في البحث

من عيسى بن علي الخليفة الاجناب العالي الجامعة الاصحاب لاجل الاجد المكرم لاجلهم لافخم
بعد سلام عليكم ورحمة مديونية وسؤال عن صحة حالكم كتابكم العزيز المورخ بلاس
وصل وعرف سعادتيكم ان الاجل المسمى عبد الغفور بن عبد العزيز بن عبد ستار الذي
بموجب الخبر لدي جنابكم انه هولي وجالس في المحق وهو الذي قد ادعى عليه شيخ
بطي بن راشد من دبي وقد بين دعواه عند شيخ مبارك مصباح حاكم الكويت
والمذكور شيخ مبارك قد طلب في كتابه المساعدة صاحب الباليون في الكويت
ان سعادتيكم يكون يحقق في الدعوى التي ادعى بها المذكور شيخ بطي
سعادتيكم مرادكم ارسال ذلك الاجل عبد الغفور الى بيت الدولة بالسرعة
حال وصول كتابكم المنفخ امرنا على السؤال عن ذلك الاجل لاجل ارساله
مسب امركم ولم يقفون اتباعنا للمذكور عبد الغفور على اثر الاخبار حسب
مضاهر انه ليس في المحق هذه الاجل البيان بالسرعة بادرنا بدعوى جواب ونحن
الى الان امرين بالسؤال الحامل عن ذلك الاجل وكنت في شغره ولم يما يحصل
عنه خيب ودمتم سالمين في كلام قد حماد لاور ١٣٤٦

True copy

W. H. H.
June 13, 1868





Koweit.

19/6/85

My dear Pudevaux,
Many thanks for yours of the
13th June & the enclosure from Sh:
Isa. I told my old man about this the
other day & he laughed & said
that he was not surprised that you
had not been able to get hold of the
writer. "Between you & me" said he
"The Sheikh's son either wrote that
letter or got it sent to me, because
Buti bin Rashid did not go & visit
them at Bahrain & I wanted to
frighten them."

The joke was not a bad one & though
it was rather cheek to use us as
his instruments to annoy the Sheikh
of Bahrain, there seemed to be nothing
to do but to treat it as a joke. He
does not want anything further to
be done. Yours sincerely S. F. Knox
P.S. I see that I have forgotten
a good deal of what I wanted to
say to you. Mohamad says that it
will be all right about the coal &
in any case you could always
get down to Bahrain by the slow
mail of 2nd or 16th July.

The B.D. have given me permission



to buy ⁵⁰ coal from their slow
Steamers' bunkers but I didn't
contemplate nor perhaps did they
my buying enough to run a launch
down to Bahrein.

I have nearly completed
your 40 loads, and am
shipping about half of it at
considerably cheaper freight
rates than I quoted to you.
Looking forward to seeing you
SK



No. 2308 of 1908.

British Residency and Consulate-General.

Bushire, 28th July 1908.



To

The Political Agent,

K o w e i t.

Sir,

7 pages 43
With reference to correspondence ending with your letter No. 237, dated the 13th May 1908, regarding Naser bin Mubarek, I have the honour to inform you that the Resident directs that if you have an opportunity you should tell Naser that Sheikh Isa is not willing to be reconciled to him and that the Resident regrets he does not see his way to move further in the matter: Major Cox's advice to him is to live quietly for the rest of his life and he would be very ill-advised to embark on rebellious or piratical course, the evil consequences of which would inevitably recoil on his own head and that of his family. As long as they continue to conduct themselves circumspectly his followers of the Al Abdulla branch can continue to apply to the Political Agent, Bahrain for his good offices in promoting a reconciliation with Sheikh Isa.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Please put
up return of
Sheikh
Mubarek
31/7/8

Captain,

First Assistant Resident.

(In charge current duties).



54

File please
Sheikh spoken to but no opportunity
found of communicating with
Hasni bin Hobarak.

19/9/5.

SK



Control
No 155 of 1909.

17 March 1909.

P.R.

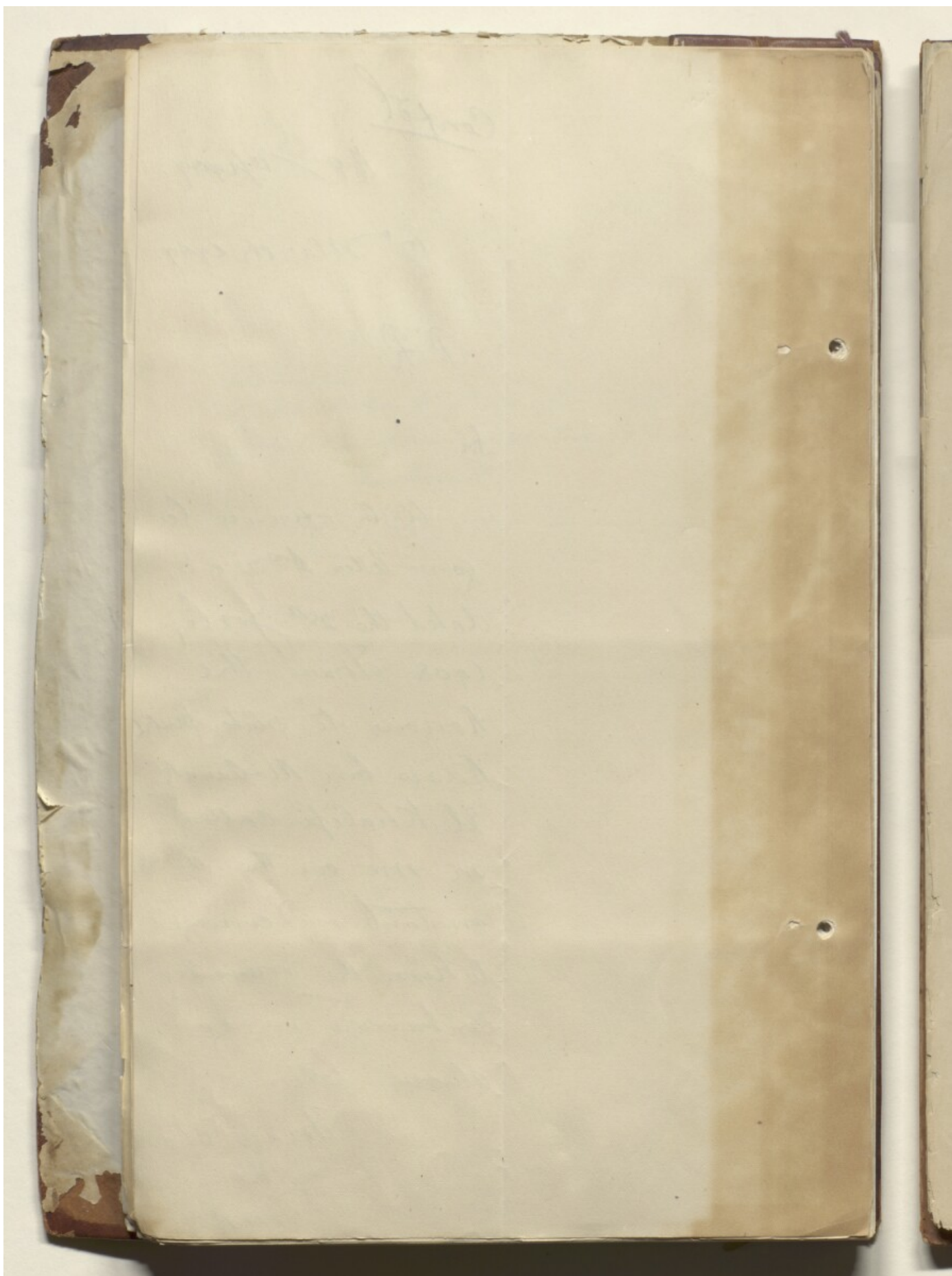
Sir

page 53

With reference to
your letter No 2308,
dated the 28th July
1908, I have the
honour to state ^{that} Sheikh
Nasir bin Moharak
El Khalifa called
on me on the 11th
instant & I conveyed
to him the message
contained in your
above letter.

I have etc
H

P.A.





No. 1989 (Confidential), dated Bushire, the 4th (received 14th) August 1911.

From—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—The HON'BLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR HENRY McMAHON, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of a communication* received from the Political Agent, Bahrain, on the subject of the Shaikh of Kuwait's recent visit and the advice said to have been given by him to Shaikh Esa.

* No. 514, dated 26th July 1911.

No. 514 (Confidential), dated Bahrain, the 26th July 1911.

From—CAPTAIN D. L. R. LORIMER, I.A., Political Agent, Bahrain,

To—COLONEL P. Z. COX, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

I have the honour to give you the following summary of reports received from various reliable quarters, regarding opinions and counsels emitted by Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait during his recent visit to Bahrain.

He is said to have in general preached from the text that "unity is strength." The Arabs should be alive to the needs of the day and should combine in working together towards definite aims. At the moment it behoved all Arabs to give their effective support to the new Arab Steamship Company.

It is further stated that he strongly counselled Shaikh Esa to resist foreign interference. He should be very careful in the future not to relinquish or compromise any of his rights or powers.

He congratulated him on the rising Amara building, and adjured him to keep the landing arrangements in his own hands. He should try to build the pier himself, if necessary, taking a loan from the merchants.

Shaikh Esa should take up a strong attitude.

The people of Debai had set an example which ought to be imitated.

The spirit of Patriotism (*wataniyya*) was a thing worthy of all praise and on it depended the life and death of the Arabs.

When in doubt or difficulty, Shaikh Esa could always look to him for sincere and wise advice.

Shaikh Mubarak is said to have taken his host to task for not having provided himself, on advice previously given, with a Steam Launch. He had, however, I think to content himself with the answer to which Political Agents are so well accustomed "I shall think over it."

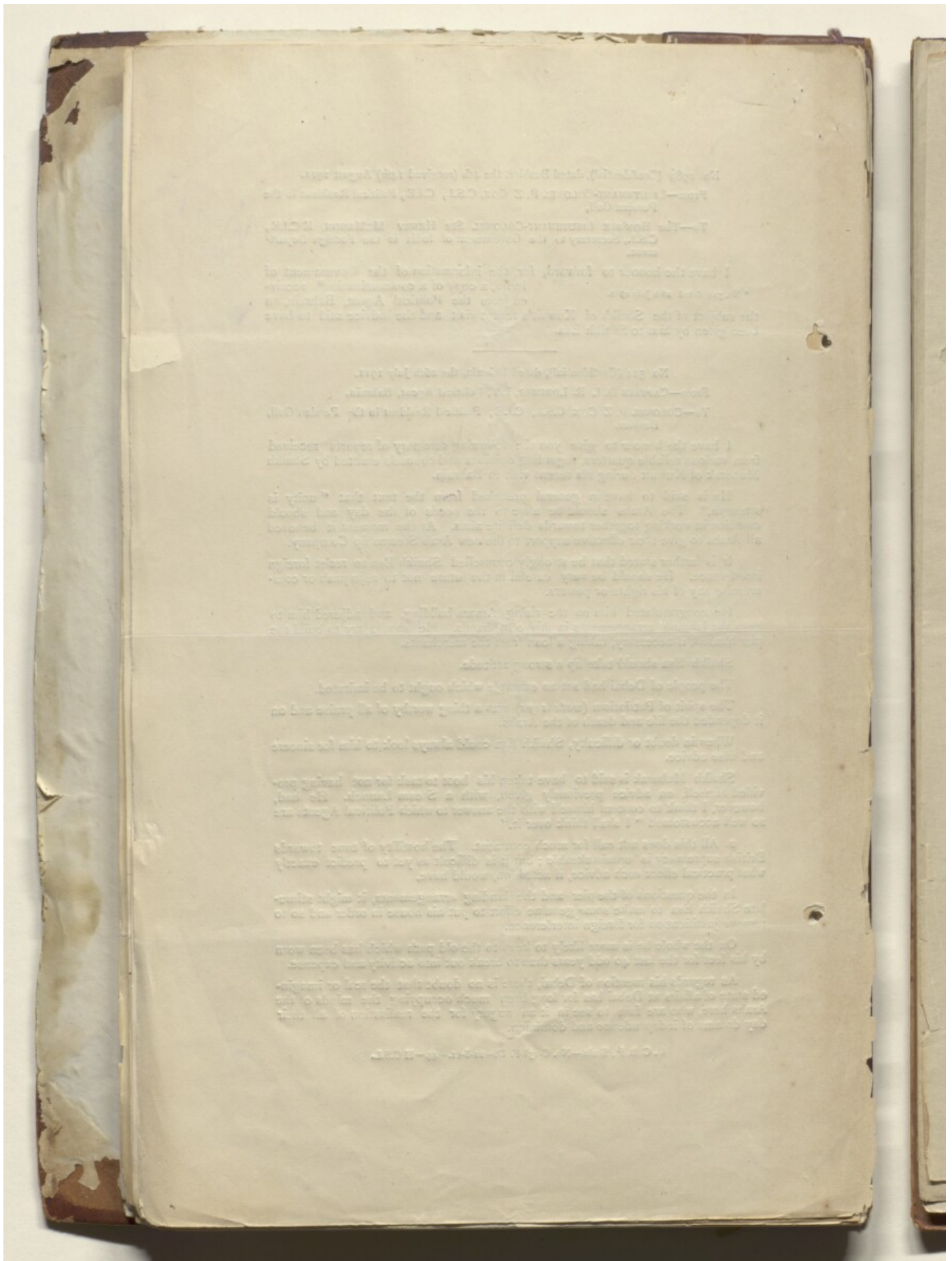
2. All this does not call for much comment. The hostility of tone towards British supremacy is unmistakeable; but it is difficult as yet to predict exactly what practical effect such advice, if acted on, would have.

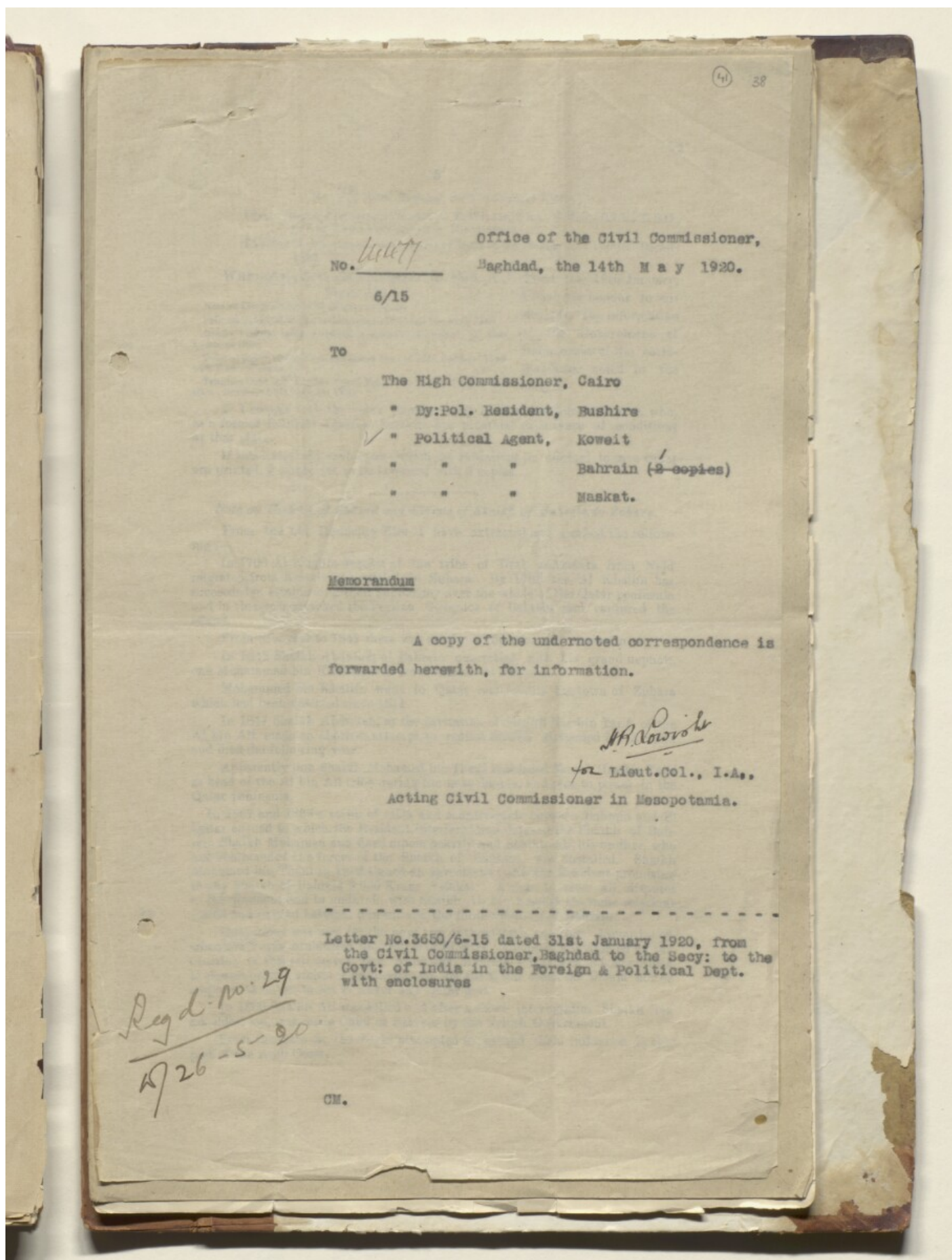
In the questions of the pier and the landing arrangements, it might stimulate Shaikh Esa to make some genuine effort to put his house in order and so to remove justification for foreign interference.

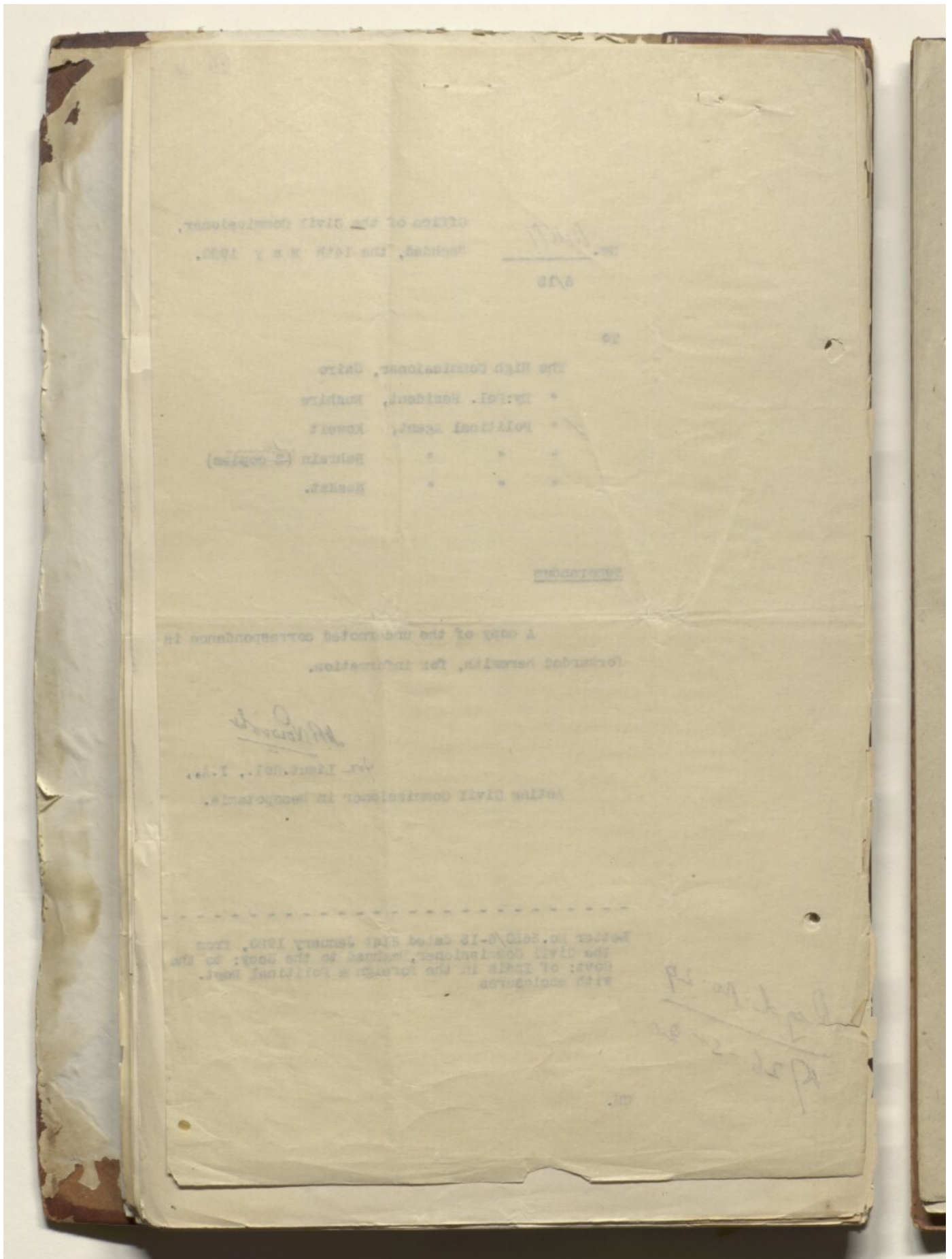
On the whole he is more likely to keep to the old path which has been worn by his feet for the last 40 odd years than to break out into activity and expense.

As regards his mention of Debai, there is no doubt that the real or imagined state of affairs at Debai has for long been much occupying the minds of the Arabs here, who are fain to see in it an augury for the realisation of all their day dreams of independence and dominion.

G. C. B. P., Simla.—No. C-138 F. D.—21-8-11.—44.—H.C.S.L.









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No. 2650
6-15 dated Baghdad, the 31st January 1920.

From—BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. T. WILSON, C.S.I., C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O.,
Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department.

With reference to your telegram No 83-E. A.,* dated the 19th January,
*serial No. 3.

Note on Claim of Shaikh of Bahrain to Zubara.

Political Agent, Bahrain's memorandum 176 of 6th December 1919.

Deputy Political Resident, Bushire's memorandum 246-S, of 28th December 1919.

Political Agent, Bahrain's memorandum 9-C. of 17th January 1920 with three enclosures.

Telegram Code from Political Agent, Bahrain, to Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, of 23rd January 1920.

I have the honour to enclose, for the information of the Government of India, copies of the correspondence noted in the margin.

2. I concur with the views expressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor, who, as a former Political Agent at Bahrain, has practical experience of conditions at that place.

If this letter and enclosures (which are submitted in original to save time) are printed, I would ask to be favoured with 5 copies.

Note on History of Zubara and Claims of Shaikh of Bahrain to Zubara.

From the old Residency files I have extracted and precised the following:—

In 1766 Al Khalifa Section of the tribe of Utab emigrants from Nejd migrated from Koweit and settled in Zubara. By 1782 the Al Khalifa has succeeded in establishing their supremacy over the whole of the Qatar peninsula and in this year attacked the Persian Governor of Bahrain and captured the island.

From this year to 1842 there was continued fighting and confusion.

In 1842 Shaikh Abdullah of Bahrain quarrelled with his grand nephew, one Mohammad bin Khalifa, and drove him out of Bahrain.

Mohammed bin Khalifa went to Qatar and rebuilt the town of Zubara which had been deserted since 1811.

In 1847 Shaikh Abdullah, at the invitation of Shaikh 'Isa bin Tarif of the Al bin Ali, made an abortive attempt to reduce Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa and died the following year.

Apparently one Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani succeeded Shaikh 'Isa bin Tarif as head of the Al bin Ali tribe during the next decade, and rose to power in the Qatar peninsula.

In 1867 and 1868 a series of raids and counter-raids between Bahrain and El Qatar ensued in which the Resident interfered and deposed the Shaikh of Bahrain Shaikh Mohamed and fined others heavily and Shaikh Ali, his brother, who had commanded the forces of the Shaikh of Bahrain, was installed. Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani in 1869 signed an agreement with the Resident promising to pay Shaikh of Bahrain 9,000 Krans "Zakat" a year, to refer all disputes to the Resident and to maintain with Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa the same relations which had existed between himself and the former Shaikh of Bahrain.

This money was paid for the next two or three years and then discontinued when the Turks established themselves in El Bida. Colonel Pelly decided on the occasion of this settlement that while the Bahrain Chief was acknowledged to possess certain rights of pasturage, etc., on the Qatar coast, he should not be empowered to put to sea to coerce any Qatar port.

In 1869 Shaikh Ali was killed and after a short interregnum Shaikh 'Isa his eldest son, was made Chief of Bahrain by the British Government.

From this date on, the Turks attempted to extend their influence in this part of the Arab Coast.



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In 1872 Shaikh 'Isa expressed a wish to re-establish a garrison in Zubara and check the intrigues of his relative Nasir-bin-Mubarak. Colonel Ross reported to Government that in his opinion the Chief had not the power to protect the tribes residing in Qatar and had advised him to remain neutral.

In 1875 the Government of India definitely warned the Shaikh of Bahrain that the consequences would be upon himself if he became involved in the mainland. To this the Shaikh replied that he submitted to the orders of Government, but did not consider his rights to Qatar invalid or extinct in consequence.

In 1879 Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani died and Shaikh Jasim bin Thani succeeded.

In 1890 Shaikh Jasim intrigued to get a Turkish garrison in Zubara and El Qatar and from then on ward for several years negotiations passed between His Majesty's Government and the Porte to evacuate these Turkish ports.

In 1895 a division of the Al bin Ali under Shaikh Sultan bin Salama fled from Shaikh 'Isa to Zubara where they were encouraged to settle by Shaikh Jasim under the Turkish flag. A naval expedition went to Zubara and a portion of the Al bin Ali were persuaded to return to Bahrain, the others went to Bida.

In 1900 Shaikh Ahmad bin Thani, who had succeeded Shaikh Jasim, wished to come under the protection of the British Government, but, owing to pressure from the Foreign Office and the Ambassador at the Porte, the project of making the arrangement fell through.

BUSHIRE:

The 2nd December 1919.

D. M. FRASER,

1st Assistant Resident.

Memorandum No. 176, dated Bahrain, the 6th December 1919. (Confidential.)

From—Major H. R. P. DICKSON, C.I.E., Political Agent, Bahrain.

To—The Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

Reference the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad's No. 32761, dated 31st October 1919, copy to me

I fear I am not in a very good position to offer criticisms on the three points raised by Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa al Khalifah, as I have only recently taken over charge of political affairs at Bahrain. What views I do, therefore, put forward must of necessity be those of one lacking experience in the affairs of the Islands and I trust due allowance will be made for discrepancies, and possibly false conclusions.

Before making any remarks on the three points raised, I should like to make some general observations on the attitude in general of Shaikh Sir Isa bin Ali al Khalifah and his sons as they have struck me newly arrived as I have in Bahrain.

From conversations I have had with both Shaikh 'Isa and his sons on different occasions, I gather that they are rather unnecessarily filled with ideas of their own importance.

The recent world talk of the "Rights of small nations" and President Wilson's utterances regarding the policy of self-determination, etc., would seem to have had its effect on the mentality of the ruling house in Bahrain. I have since my arrival been frequently reminded by Shaikh Isa that "Great Britain never interferes in our affairs"—such pointed phrases as the "Hakumat al Bahrain"—the "Malika of Bahrain" (the Shaikh's wife) "Kul Dowlah fi huriatiba," etc., have become rather common of late. There would appear to be an idea abroad that the hand of His Majesty's Government in future is going to be much more lightly felt, and that a much larger measure of independence than heretofore is to be granted to the Ruler of Bahrain and other Arab Rulers. This feeling has been fostered than otherwise I think by the recent amendments to the Order-in-Council regarding the Shaikh's control over subjects of neighbouring Arab States.



The above being the state of mind of the Shaikh of Bahrein and his advisers, I do not think one may be surprised at the three requests made by Shaikh Abdul'ah in London.

To turn to the three points in question.

Point 1—The Civil Commissioner states in his No. 12988, dated 30th October 1919, to "Zinneremo," London, that the matter was for all practical purposes settled when the Order-in-Council was brought into force. There are still points, however, over which a ruling is required. As I understand it, the term "neighbouring Arab Rulers" refers to the inhabitants of Qatar Peninsula and Nejd. Is it intended to refer to the inhabitants of Oman, Kuwait, Zanzibar, Hadramaut, Yemen, etc., the inhabitants of all which places are to be found here trading at all times? In other words are local resident subjects of the Rulers of Oman, Kuwait, Zanzibar, Hejaz and inhabitants of Hadramaut and Yemen to be considered under the jurisdiction of the Shaikh of Bahrein or under that of the Political Agent? A ruling is required on this point as Shaikh 'Isa certainly thinks he should control them.

Point 2—I have nothing to say except that up to the day of his departure, my predecessor was carrying on a correspondence with the Shaikh of Bahrein over this very subject. The Shaikh had dismissed a member of the "Majlis-al Urfi" and had appointed another member without the knowledge or approval of the Political Agent. The circumstances suggested an attempt to make a test case to see how far the Political Agent would be supported.

The Political Agent contended that under the Order-in-Council he had every right to be consulted in the matter and refused to recognise "Majlis-al-Urfi" until Shaikh 'Isa withdrew his nomination. My predecessor went away at this stage of the crisis and it has been left for me to settle the tangle. I certainly consider the Order-in-Council is clear on the subject and should be insisted on. In the meantime the Majlis-al-Urfi's sittings have been suspended pending settlement of this vexed question.

Point 3. The question of Zubara.—I have been through a great many files on the subject and have consulted confidentially various local people of prominence, without, of course, divulging the reasons for my questions. The conclusions I have arrived at are that it would be distinctly unwise to allow Shaikh 'Isa to occupy Zubara. On the following grounds:—

- (a) Shaikh Abdullah bin Jassim of Qatar would strongly resent the Shaikh of Bahrein again getting a footing on the Qatar peninsula. He is a weaker man and Zubara in the hands of Shaikh 'Isa would be a pistol at his head always.
- (b) Shaikh Abdullah bin Jassim would certainly object to the development of a new port on the peninsula of Qatar since it would at once divert all trade from Dohah (Bida) to Zubara and he would not only lose a large amount of revenue at present accruing from the Customs House Al Dohah, but would stand every chance of seeing Dohah entirely disappear as the seaport of Qatar.
- (c) Ibn Saud similarly would take offence at a revival of the port of Zubara under Shaikh 'Isa's jurisdiction for like reasons to (b) above, as such a port would mean the killing of his new trade centre of O'Jair. It should be noted that the harbour of Zubara is naturally much better than that of either Dohah or O'Jair, and with the Shaikh of Bahrein actually compelling all Bahrein trade to go to the mainland through his port of Zubara, the end of both Abdullah bin Jassim's and Ibn Saud's ports would be certain and quick. As matters stand a good deal of coolness already exists between Ibn Saud and Shaikh 'Isa owing to the latter having recently instituted a 5 per cent. tax on goods passing through Bahrein for O'Jair even though such goods never leave the Bahrein Customs House. Ibn Saud contends that Shaikh 'Isa should only take demurrage charges (or Arthiyeh).

In my opinion the suggestion of Shaikh 'Isa's that he be allowed to revive a ten-year-old controversy should be nipped in the bud. The new move is



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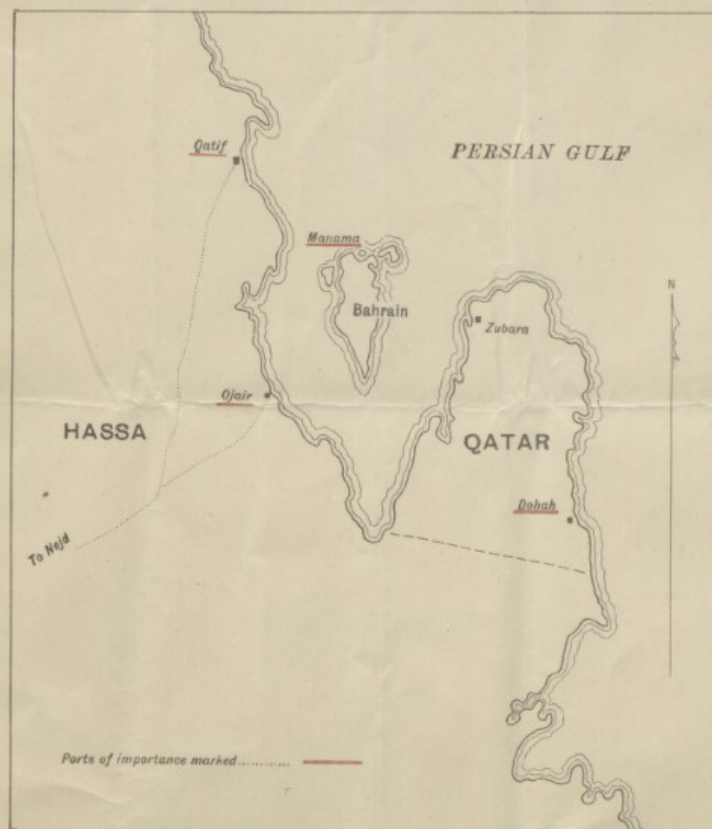
obviously an attempt to extend his power territorially and financially at the expense of Ibn Saud and Abdullah bin Jassim and will only end in trouble. Further I consider it is the thin edge of the wedge to Shaikh Isa laying afresh his claim to be ruler of the whole peninsula of Qatar, which claim was definitely I gather quashed some fifteen years ago.

I attach a small sketch map to illustrate my remarks regarding Zubara.

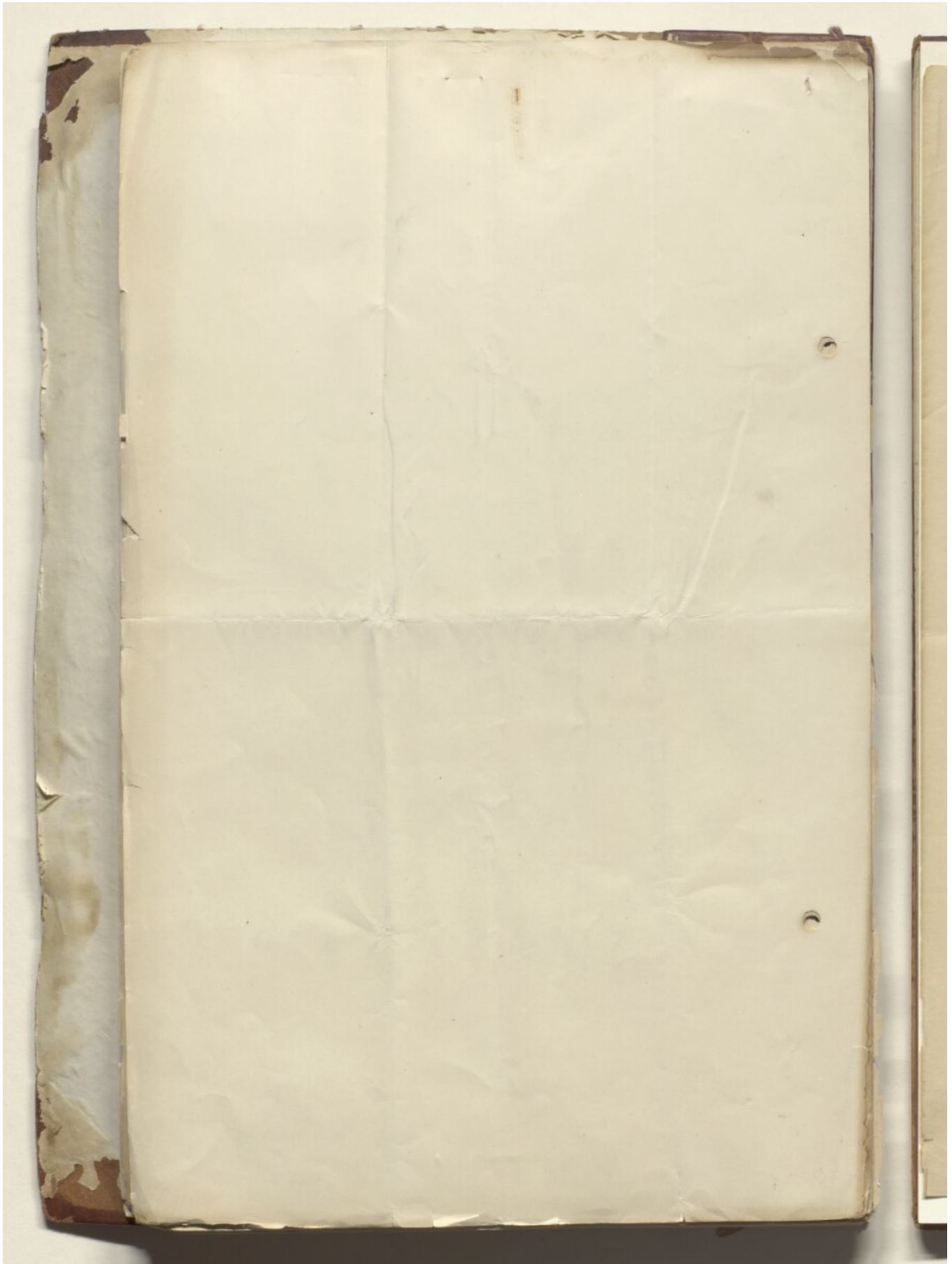
Regarding point 4. I have no remarks to make.

Copy to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, with reference to his
No. ^{32/61}₆₋₁₆ of 31st October 1919, to the Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

1257FAD



S. D. O. No. 2794, February 1920.





14681
No. 6/14 Office of the Civil Commissioner,
Baghdad, the 14th May 1920.

To

The High Commissioner, Cairo
The Dy:Pol.Resident, Bushire
The Pol. Agent, Bahrain (2 copies)
The " " Koweit
The " " Maskat.

Memorandum

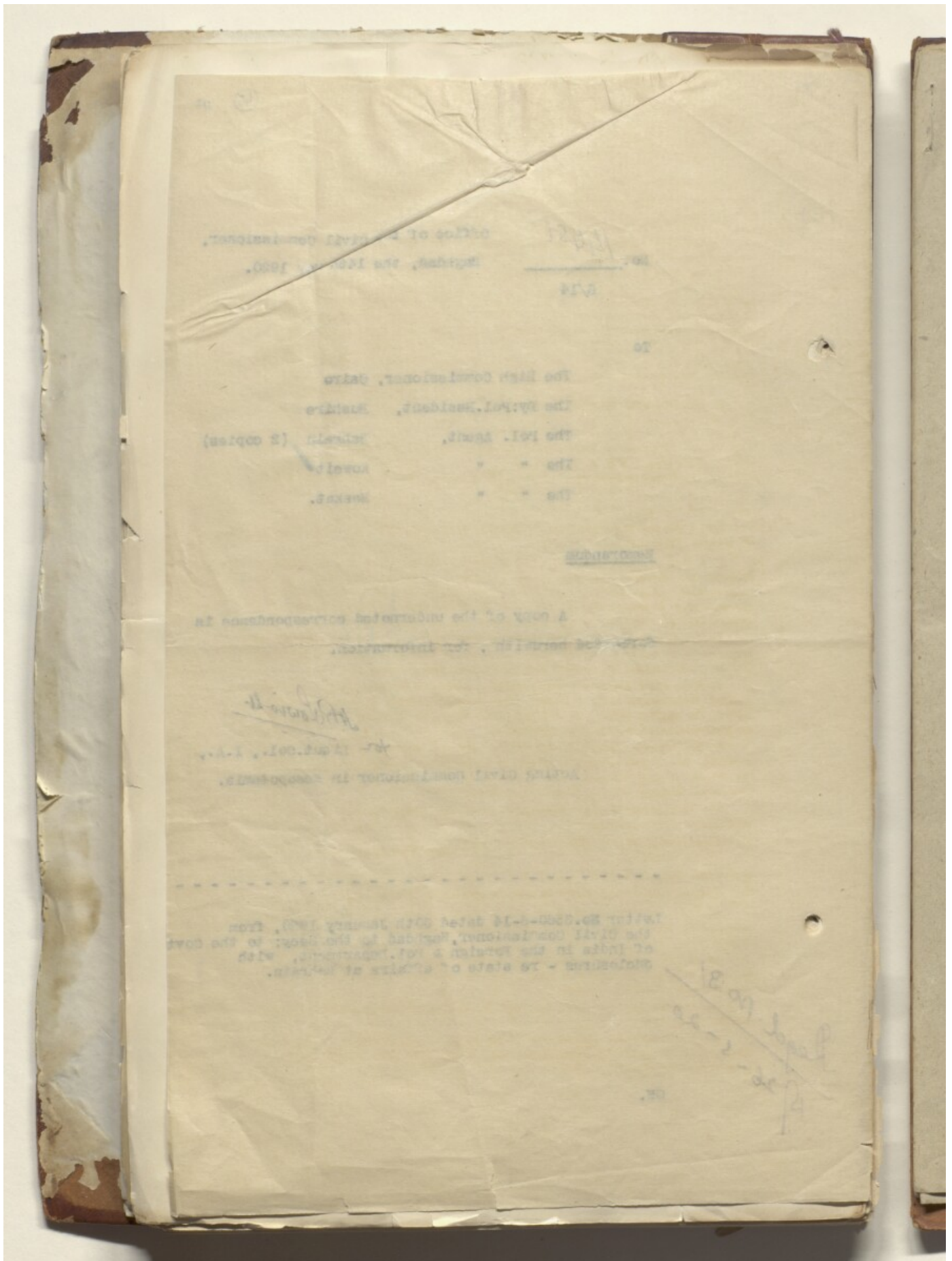
A copy of the undernoted correspondence is
forwarded herewith, for information.

McLoughlin
for Lieut.Col., I.A.,
Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.

Letter No. 3560-6-14 dated 30th January 1920, from
the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad to the Secy: to the Govt
of India in the Foreign & Pol. Department, with
enclosures - re state of affairs at Bahrain.

*Legal. No 3/
1926-5-20.*

GM.





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No. 3590-6-14, dated Baghdad, the 30th January 1920.

From—Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel A. T. Wilson, C.S.I., C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O.,
Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political
Department.

I enclose herewith, for the information of the Government of India, copies

Demi-official letter, dated 27th May 1919, from Mr. Norman
N. E. Bray, on Board "Lawrence," to Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel
A. T. Wilson, Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

Demi-official letter, dated 17th June 1919, from Mr. G. H. Bill,
Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, to Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel
A. T. Wilson, Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

Memorandum No. 6-C, of 5th January 1920, from Political Agent,
Bahrain, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, with enclosure.

of the marginally noted
correspondence which has
passed between Political
Agent, Bahrain, Deputy
Political Resident,
Bushire, and this office in
regard to the state of
affairs at Bahrain.

If printed I shall be glad of ten copies.

Demi-official, dated Board "Lawrence," the 27th May 1919.

From—NORMAN N. E. BRAY, Esq.,
To—Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel A. T. Wilson, C.S.I., C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O.,
Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

I find the following matters at Bahrain very unsatisfactory and consider
we should attempt to rectify them.

1. I find a considerable feeling of hostility to ourselves due to religious,
economical, personal and war reasons, assisted in a negative way by the
missionaries. Also there is a considerable party hostile to the Shaikh and
consequently to ourselves. In contrast to this I find no British party and a
general lack of touch especially with those hostile to ourselves.

Proposed remedy (1) Half-monthly majlis to explain any matter of
importance, to act as a vent for public opinion, to hear grievances and to bring
the Agent into closer touch with British subjects and Foreigners.

2. More entertaining especially of those hostile or supposedly so; up to the
present these have been excluded from association with the Agency. This I
hold to be wrong policy, as an odd word may give warning of trouble, or a
sentence enable an action to be anticipated.

3. The definite formation of a British party by indirect methods, such as
rewards, which you have kindly agreed to, by closer association, and by visits,
by letters of appreciation from yourself or Mr. Bill, in really deserved
instances, through schools, presents and literature.

(b) The extraordinary backwardness of the place considering its long
association with ourselves.

I propose to improve the water supply } Capital already promised.
To get electrical plant.

Start the municipality on sound lines; at present it is only a pretence.

Import fruit trees suitable to climate and soil and trees.

(c) The ignorance of even the highest classes. School immediately
imperative and strong support offered, but must be under control of Political
Agent.

(d) Local industries practically non-existent. I propose to enquire
seriously into pearl button machinery, and, if practicable, to introduce. Also
to start small industrial school.

As regards (b), (c) and (d) any amount of capital is available and at
present lying idle.

(e) The American missionaries. I am not at all satisfied that the American
Government is not behind their activities. I will give full details as far as
I have gone in report.



6

I view with suspicion their activities at Hasa, especially this latest move for buying dates and starting a date factory there. I would like further enquiries made as to the visit of Tomlinson on 14th-15th April. He came to buy dates for Hill and Company. I have extremely reliable information that he brought comparatively small quantities, but visited important merchants at Najd and received orders for 3 lakhs of cotton cloths. Further the missionaries have entirely ceased to convert, are entertaining largely, are giving presents in great numbers, holding Majlis and are particularly friendly to all those whom I know to be hostile to ourselves. They at the best are neutral in opinions asked by Arabs of rumour in our disfavour.

Remedy. If they entertain, I propose to double it; if they hold a Majlis, I propose to do the same.

I propose to place an Agent in Hasa for this and other reasons and possibly in Qatif. Once again the above is only very briefly put.

(f) Shaikh Abdulla's visit will, I hope, be the remedy to many evils in administration and result in peace and progress, and I hope to make his visit more one for educational purposes than pleasure, and I hope you will approve my considering this to be the main object of the visit, the education of course being made as pleasant as possible, but that I should constantly bear in mind local requirements rather than sight-seeing as such.

(g) *The Ikhwan movement.*—That through the above progressive proposals we should use Bahrein as the place from which we may hope to influence central Arabia and educate it. That the Agent should pay frequent visits to Hasa, Qatif, etc., and invite the Amirs and some of their officials to Bahrein. That agriculture should be encouraged on the mainland in order to employ these fanatics more profitably. I understand that there are large areas capable of irrigation with the aid of machinery. If this could be accomplished large numbers of Ikhwan might be settled. Bin Saud has constantly broached the subject, and I might make it one of my duties to get estimates and see types of pumps, etc., at home. We could illustrate their utility and introduce them at Hasa.

I know how hard up you are for cars, but I would be grateful for a Ford if you can spare one at any time. I think that the Agent should know every village in the Island, every Shaikh and every Amir and constantly visit them. It is more likely that in the small villages people will talk and give me a fair idea of what is going on in there. In Manama a Ford could go anywhere on the Island and further could be taken to the mainland and possible motor routes explored as far as Hasa on toward Riadh and Koweit.

Demi-official, dated Bushire, the 17th June 1910.

From—G. H. BILL, Esq., Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

To—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. T. WILSON, C.I.E., D.S.O., C.M.G., Officiating Political Resident, Persian Gulf, Baghdad.

Bray's demi-official of May 27th raises a large question of principle, which applies not only to Bahrein, or even to Nejd, but to the whole of the territories bordering on the Persian Gulf. It is a question to which I have given much thought, and the issue may be fairly stated as follows:—

Hitherto the historic role of the British Government in these waters has been that of keeper of the Maritime Truce. Until very recent times our claims to predominance in the Persian Gulf, though well enough founded on our performances in the role mentioned above, were not really much supported by any exertions of ours in the direction of lighting and buoying, although British statesmen were in the habit of assuming this for public consumption. That has, however, now been remedied; but the fact remains that Great Britain has been the maritime policeman of the Gulf, and very little more. Is it, or is it not, desirable that we should take a pronounced step further, and assume the responsibility for a gradual education of the Gulf populations on the lines of Western civilisation?



On the Persian Coast we are no doubt slightly handicapped by the claims of the Persian Government to a consideration which is given it by none of its own subjects, and indeed by practically no one but ourselves; but on the Arab side, with the disappearance of the Turks, we have an absolutely free hand, and the time has certainly come for a definite decision on policy.

There can be no doubt at all that if we can exclude any future political competitor (there is none in sight at present), and if we simply pursue our present policy of abstention, the coastal Arab of 2019 will be exactly the same as his forefather of to-day, except that he may spend his earnings from pearl-diving in a slightly different way; he will not move *suo motu*. It is a very arguable position, which is by no means without attraction to my mind, that he is, though an animal, a fairly happy animal, and that the heady wine of Western civilisation may merely turn him into a discontented decadent.

On the other hand, such a policy accords very ill with the present trend of policy in India, and in particular with the sentiments of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and would stand little chance of deliberate adoption, I should think, by the Powers that be, if they were brought face to face with it.

In any case, it is desirable to do this; to bring them face to face with it, and make it clear that we can either let the Arab continue to dream out his low life, or we can set ourselves to create in him a divine discontent. In any case, let us know what we are doing. A sordid, but weighty detail, in favour of the former policy is that the latter is bound to cost a good deal of money, and there is not the remotest chance that anything in the nature of schools or hospitals will be self-supporting in these tracts. It is much more likely, except, I think, in Bahrein, that any such efforts will be met with a stolid, and solid, opposition, as tending to interfere with cherished institutions, such as the sectarianism of the Wahabi and Omani, and the possession of diving slaves.

So much for the question of principle; if we are to let things alone, the enthusiastic local officer, like Bray, must be discouraged, and informed that if devout American citizens like to spend their dollars enlightening the Bahreini, it is no concern of ours, and in any case we are not going to enter into competition with them at Government expense. In the same way we should leave Shaikh Abdulla Bin Jasim of Qatar, and all the petty Shaikhs of the crucial coast, and their subjects, as much alone as we do at present.

Assuming, however, that the alternative policy is deliberately accepted with its necessary financial consequences, I sketch below what I conceive might be the lines of development in each sphere.

I take *Bahrein* first, an actually and potentially the most important, and as the subject of Bray's letter. Setting aside for the moment his projects for an active competition with the American missionaries, his proposals for permanent institutions are—

(a) A municipality run "on sound lines," i.e., in the present state of Bahrein, on lines approved by the Agency, the running of the machine being also carefully, if at the same time quietly and tactfully, supervised by the Political Agent.

(b) A school, obviously on the same lines.

From the standpoint now adopted, these proposals are obviously sound; I would go further and say they are indispensable, if the Bahrein is to be raised in the scale of Western civilisation.

It is also true that though there will be more people in Bahrein who will welcome these developments than anywhere else, still there will be an actively hostile party, or, if Bray's estimate of the American activities is correct, even two hostile parties; that of Islamic conservatism, and that of American propagandism. To meet these, and create an atmosphere favourable to the new ventures, a good deal of propaganda work will unquestionably be required.

I do not at present regard the case against the American Mission as proved; that is, I do not consider it certain that their attitude, which was first noted and reported by Loch, is not due to local idiosyncracies rather than to the deliberate policy of their headquarters. Foreign's endorsement No. 543-W., dated 2nd



June last, certainly goes to show that the State Department is not paying very close attention to the affairs of this region. You will notice that the whole of the Persian Gulf, including even Basrah, is included by them in "British India," and the American subject promises not to transgress the laws of British India while residing in Muscat, a State with which the American Government itself has a treaty. I should be inclined to attribute the extra activity shown by the missionaries at the moment to the personal energy of Dr. Harrison, and any anti-British bias to the strong Dutch sentiments of the Rev. Dykstra. I hazard a conjecture that if the latter were to take his departure, there would be little further ground for this complaint. In support of this is the attitude of the mission at Koweit, which I have always understood to be definitely friendly to British influence. However, the propaganda work undertaken to win over the Islamic conservative could equally well serve to conciliate all classes.

One caution; the most conservative Arab on the whole island used to be Shaikh Isa himself; he certainly seems to have modified his attitude lately, but I am not sure that he would quite swallow the new municipality. In any case, his susceptibilities would have to be very carefully considered.

Shaikh Abdulla's visit to Europe should certainly yield very valuable results in this direction, if his mind is not too crowded with impressions, and if he can avoid exciting the jealousy of his brothers on his return.

It is little use saying anything about Nejd and Hasa under present circumstances. As far as I understand the situation, the fact is now well in the fire, and we can only wait for the results. However it would do no harm at all for Bray to go deeply into the question of machine pumps, and bring out pots of good literature on the subject. If the present crisis gives birth to anything like a really stable government in Persia, I have plenty of projects of the kind.

As regards the steam tug I am writing to you separately.

The above covers the ground as regards Bahrein, I think. The net result is that assuming the new policy, all that is necessary is money for propaganda work, with a view to the establishment, as soon as possible, of a good school and a strong municipality. Bray's other desiderata are points of detail.

Next to Bahrein, we have *Qatar* and the *Trucial Coast*. I should be inclined to deal with them together, as they are in the same stage of primitiveness and the Political Agent, Bahrein, will have his hands full with Bray's programme. The first condition of any advance in those regions is the establishment of a Political Agency, as suggested by Sir Percy at intervals from 1911 to the outbreak of war. You doubtless remember the Zora correspondence; Zora was eventually abandoned, but every year on the approach of the cold weather Sir Percy asked whether the post and telegraph scheme for Debai could be proceeded with, and every year some reason was found which prevented action till the approach of the hot weather. Government never, as far as I can discover, agreed to the establishment of an Agency, but in his despatch No. 1112 of 30th April 1911, Sir Percy said "once our telegraph station was installed the rest would gradually follow, automatically"; and it is difficult to imagine anything as "the rest" except the establishment of a regular Agency. The idea at the time was that New might run over occasionally from Lingah; but I regard this as a very unsatisfactory compromise.

There would be no practical difficulty that I can see, if the nettle were grasped firmly enough; the Shaikhs in general, and the Shaikh of Debai in particular, would be reminded of the old correspondence about posts and telegraphs, and their obligations under the agreement, and notified that we were about to open up a post and telegraph office at Debai, as the most central spot. This communication would be conveyed by the Resident or Deputy in the "Lawrence," and the ship bringing the staff and guard would arrive the same day. There would be a temporary fuss, but I don't for a moment think things would go up to boiling point. Of course, the local situation would have to be studied beforehand more carefully than I have done this year.



Of course, the Trucial Coast and Qatar Agency would have to go slow in the matter of schools, etc., for some years, but if Bahrein is to be the model Arab Principality, the Political Agent, Trucial Coast, could work slowly up to the model.

Mascat.—I need hardly mention; there are enough schemes on foot for its development.

Persian Mekran is a source of continual anxiety to me. There can be no doubt that the whole province is in a thoroughly unsatisfactory state, and unless we assert ourselves in some forcible way, it will not be possible to carry out the annual repairs of the land line next cold weather. I only propose at the moment a repetition of Keyes' Mission, with a commission to report on the best political arrangements for the future. But something of the kind absolutely must be done, unless Government prefers the obvious alternative of abandoning the land line (we could not pull it up, without an armed party), and laying an additional cable. Here again I think we shall find ourselves obliged to spend rather more money, and have permanent political representation. This would be better justified, in that I am sure the solid and responsible elements among the Baluchis would welcome it, as a good excuse for dropping their wearisome and expensive feuds.

Finally, of course, if we are going in for a general civilising mission in these waters, the coastal tract from Lingah to Bushire offers an excellent, and absolutely virgin, field. But I think the above sketch provides enough for the time being; and the susceptibilities of the Tehran Government would doubtless be outraged by our attempting to do any good for their nominal subjects.

Memorandum No. 6-C, dated Bahrein, the 5th January 1920. (*Secret*.)

From—MAJOR H. K. V. DICKSON, C.I.E., Political Agent, Bahrein.

To—
 { The Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.
 { The Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

The attached note on the existing political situation in Bahrein is forwarded for information.

The note is compiled from close personal study and observation of the people of Bahrein during the last two months, also for valuable material left behind by my predecessor Captain N. N. E. Bray, M.C.

Note on the political situation in Bahrein as existing at the end of 1919, with suggestions and proposals for improving the situation.

1. I arrived in Bahrein on November 6th, 1919, and since my arrival I have taken pains to try and get at the bottom of the curious atmosphere of hostility which seems to exist everywhere in Bahrein for the foreigner and more especially towards the Agency. To accomplish my purpose I have spent much time interviewing persons, great and small, and have taken special care to get at the confidence of people by frequent visits and dinner parties at the houses of residents of all shades of opinion, both neutral, Sunni and Shiah. I have also been largely helped in my investigations by riding round among the many hamlets of the Island and chatting over a cup of coffee with the local head-man surrounded by his villagers in the local guest chamber. The general conclusions that I have arrived at are enumerated below:

2. In my opinion—

- (a) The political atmosphere of Bahrein while not in any way dangerous is wholly unsatisfactory.
- (b) There is a strong anti-British sentiment which is long standing and deepseated.
- (c) British prestige rests on entirely false standards, namely on fear and not on respect.

I consider our task therefore both extremely difficult, yet imperative.



3. It would be quite useless were I to make the bold statements above, had not strong proofs to substantiate them and suggested remedies in different directions to rectify them. The character and methods of Shaikh 'Isa bin 'Ali al Khalifah, K.C.S.I., C.S.I., the Ruler of Bahrein, are so well known as hardly to bear repetition, yet I must perforce give a rough sketch of the man so as to convey the true atmosphere prevailing. Shaikh 'Isa is a timid ruler, at the same time I believe he is a very loyal friend to ourselves and means extremely well by us. Friendly letter that he writes to myself either personal or for transmission to His Majesty's Government give him almost childish pleasure, and he has been heard on several occasions to tell others of them and boast about the said friendliness. In opposition to this he is continually attempting to assert his supposed rights in an illadvised way and to cause small embarrassments by puerile methods and easily discernable intentions.

The explanation of such contrary virtues and vices is easy of explanation. His own personal feelings are undoubtedly of the friendliest nature to ourselves, those of his advisers by no means unanimous in this respect. Their reasons for their hostile attitude may be divided into two degrees:—

"A" An honest one, that we may ourselves appreciate;

"B" A dishonest one;

both call for special consideration and different methods of handling.

"A" The honest opposition is based partly on *fear*, partly on *pride*, partly on *suspicion*, inherent in Arab minds, and partly on *ignorance* appalling in its completeness.

(i) *Fear* of a great power who has them so completely in its control makes them anxious to grasp and hold on to what actual freedom and liberty of action remains to them, with the constant dread that their freedom may be still further curtailed.

(ii) *Pride*, which is equally part of the Arab character, encourages them to acts that will gain them renown, however small, in the eyes of their compatriots, and makes them equally averse to surrender an action once committed, or an attitude once assumed. Pride of comparison bears a real part in their line of thought, that is to say, their own power compared to that exercised by other Arab rulers, and the fear of loss of prestige in any curtailment of their powers in the eyes of other rulers.

(iii) *Suspicion*, which, as I said above, is an inherent vice or virtue, depending on the standpoint of regard in the constitution of Arab minds, and which always exists in the minds of a more or less primitive people, its degree depending on the extent of their backwardness, as a wild animal depends on suspicion, whilst a domesticated depends on its confidence, for its comfort and well being.

(iv) *Ignorance* of anything outside their own environment is so astonishing as to merit a special paragraph to itself, and I will treat this question further on in this note. But it is a real and distressing factor with which we have to deal. All the above are what we might call honest drawbacks, which we may appreciate, sympathize with and gradually remove by personal intercourse, sympathy, example and tact. The pity of it is that these characteristics are taken advantage of by those ill-disposed towards and I attribute eighty per cent. of our difficulties in our relationship with the ruler, and the present low standard of prestige, as due to them.

B—Dishonest opposition.

This we may take for granted comes in no inconsiderable extent from those in opposition to Shaikh Isa himself; mainly from his cousins Ali Ibrahim Rashid the sons of Mahomed al Khalifah who was formerly deposed by us, and to a certain extent from the heir presumptive. Quite apart from the natural hostility of the former family to ourselves for ousting their clan (hamoula) from the succession and their natural rights, it may be easily understood how they would be only too ready to advise Shaikh 'Isa to take a line of action that will bring him in opposition to ourselves. For they aim at nothing less than the deposition of the Shaikh himself, and clumsy diplomats as they are, they hope and never cease from attempting to accomplish this by trying to



make us lose patience with the present ruler, through his apparent obstinacy and maladministration, both of which they encourage and excite. They may therefore be said to be playing a two-handed game, one incited by their own hopes and ambitions and the other fostered by their real hostility to ourselves, for supposed wrongs committed and natural dislike of the white foreigner, the more so as he has behind him the mighty strength of a great nation.

Thus then may we sum up the character of Shaikh 'Isa bin 'Ali al Khalifah with its resultant effects on his dealings with ourselves :

"A very old and weak man, imbued with sincere feelings of friendship and regard for His Majesty's Government, swayed and confused in his weakness by virile and astute minds and delicate intriguers, dictated for the most part by evil intentions to himself, to us and to both—helped in this by the characteristics of Arab mentality mentioned above."

4. We must now turn our attention from the "Entourage" of the Ruler to the "Mass" and in this direction are causes of hostility and lack of prestige no less interesting and no less delicate. For here we have the "pawns" in the game and the material for the edifice of hostility.

We will divide them into two classes :—

A—The Government officials ;

B—The notables of the Islands.

A—Like all Government officials of an oriental State, we may expect to find abuse of authority and extortion, but unlike most oriental States in such close relationship to a European Power, we may be justly grieved to find that these exceed all bonds of propriety and sense of justice, so much so as to call forth the odium of the Arabs themselves. The Amirs or Governors of the towns of Muharraq and Manama are officials entirely unsuited for control, and the power they wield is oppressive and immoral.

The Amir of Manama encourages and receives an income from prostitutes and gamblers, impresses boat and donkey transport in a shameless manner and generally extorts money from householders, shopkeepers and the people as a whole.

The Amirs of Muharraq is little better, and would be equally as bad, were he not more or less under the supervision of the Shaikh who resides there for the greater part of the year.

The Amirs being men of this stamp, it is not surprising that the "*Fidawis*" (police) and officials under them follow their lead.

This being so, it is obvious that any measure of reform is at once opposed by these gentlemen, and intrigues set on foot to prevent them being carried out.

B—*The Notables of the Island.*—Of these 25 per cent. are friendly to a greater or less degree, while 75 per cent. are definitely hostile.

I will attempt to describe the more important of them further on in this note, but for the present I will confine myself to anticipating the causes of our unpopularity in a general way before coming to details.

These causes we may study under three headings :—

(i) War, (ii) Normal, (iii) Individual.

(i) *War.*

(a) *Economical.*—The necessary restrictions due to the war have hit the Island hard as in most other places. The prohibition of the export of silver and restrictions as to the export of rice from India during 1919 especially have caused acute hardship and discontent, but except where these have been taken advantage of by ill-disposed persons they should be speedily corrected or eradicated by the return of normal conditions, when present prohibition prices will fall and normal trade be resumed. Our efforts then must be directed to the removal as soon as possible of trade restrictions made necessary by the war.



(b) *Propaganda*.—This has left its scars, and is still existent. The present uncertainty of future status, active pro-Turk feeling and Khilafat propaganda from India, are exercising men's minds and providing material for hostile endeavour. This can be eradicated or partly reduced by measures proposed [see paragraph e].

(ii) *Normal*.

- (a) *Fanatical hostility*, due to ultra-religious feeling among the Arabs; this is to be expected in a place like Bahrein, which has always taken its cue from Najd, but it can be reduced by intercourse and closer touch. (The "Akhwan" movement of the mainland has undoubtedly increased this feeling of hostility.)
- (b) *Persians*, due in the first place to a rather unfriendly and fanatical Shiah Persian community, but also due to recent political events in Persia, and the natural leaning of the Persian towards intrigue.
- (c) *Ignorance*.—It is difficult to credit the hopeless ignorance that exists in Bahrein, even among the best families. Those who have travelled and seen something of the world are a class apart. But the Shaikhs (ruling house) and people generally are the most ignorant people I have ever met. No story, however, impossible is too extravagant for their credulity. Isolated to a deplorable extent, they are callous and indifferent to outside matters of any kind. I refer not to the humble and poor, but to the rich and influential. Very few can write. Geographical knowledge is appalling, politics of most amazing conception, they cannot understand the simplest measure of administration or reform, incapable of clear statement and sound reasoning, intellectually dull and naturally stupid. It is for this reason that I specially advocate at homes, weekly durbars, evening visits and a newspaper to help broaden their minds and help their judgment.

(iii) *Individual*.

I attach a black and white list of important Bahrein individuals with a short description against each. The list is by no means complete, but is interesting as an index to the various causes and effects it is necessary to study. I also attach a list of important individuals who do not pay visits to the Political Agent.

WHITE LIST.

Arabs.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Salman bin Matar | . A wealthy pearl merchant, very friendly. |
| 2. Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo, M.B.E. | . Influential merchant; has incurred hatred of Shaikh' Isa and his anti-English advisers for his friendliness to us. Undoubtedly would get into serious trouble if British ever withdrew from Bahrein. |
| 3. Abdullah bin Mahmud | . Pearl dealer. |
| 4. Hajj Ahmad bin Yatim | . General merchant, member of the Majlis al Urfa. |
| 5. Salman Megoo | . General merchant, very friendly to us. |
| 6. Abdul Aziz al Qusaibi | . Bin Sand's agent in Bahrein. One of the best type of Nejd, a fervent supporter of the Imam, an "Akhwan" in his tenets. Very friendly to the British. |
| 7. Abd-el'Rahman al Qusaibi | . Brother to (6) and equally friendly, spends six months each year in Bombay making purchases for Bin Sand and people of Nejd generally. |
| 8. Mahomed Ali al Zaiyani | . General merchant, regularly visits India. |
| 9. Sayed Mahomed Jamal al Lail | . Head man of the Yemen community; anti-Turk and anti-ruler of Bahrein; would like to see British in absolute control here. |



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10. Mahomed bin Hamad al Qazi . A well read Nejd merchant from Anaizeh.
11. Sulaiman bin Hamad al Bassam . Nejd merchant of well-known Bassam family established Basra, Mecca, Baghdad, Damascus, etc.
12. Seyed Ahmed bin Seyed Alawwi . Bahrain pearl merchant and broker. The leading Shiah inhabitant. Very British, often goes to India. Afraid of showing his liking for us, for fear of persecution from the Ruler of Bahrain. Has secretly applied to become a British subject, was once imprisoned and fined Rs. 5,000 by Shaikh 'Isa; became bankrupt owing failure in pearls, now gradually looking up again. A man with greatest influence among Baharna villagers of the Island.
13. Shaikh Abdul Latif al Dosari . Of Buddaiya, cousin of Shaikh Abdulla al. Dosari. Pro-British probably on account of Shaikh Abdulla, being chief friend and adviser of Sheikh Abdulla bin Isa al Khalifa, C.I.E., Shaikh 'Isa's youngest son. A frequent visitor to Agency and good provider of local news.

Persians.

14. Khan Sahib Muhammad Sharif A wealthy general merchant, head man of the Persian community, pro-British and friendly to the Agency.
15. Muhammad Farook Akil A wealthy and influential general merchant with firms in Bombay, Lingah, Debai, Henjam.
16. Yousaf Lutfali Khunji . English educated general merchant. Pro-British, keeps up English style, subscribes London Times, Graphic and the Near East. He is very friendly with the Agency. He is gone to Bombay where he intends establishing a good business and will stay there five months in a year during winter.
17. Abdul Nabi Bushiri . Wealthy partners in general business. Once suspected of smuggling tea, but now friendly towards the Agency. Follow Khan Sahib Muhammad Sharif's advice. They hold no political views.
18. Abul Kassar . Ditto ditto ditto.

BLACK LIST.

Arabs.

1. Haji Yusuf bin Abdul Rahman Formerly noted arm smuggler from Muscat and Bahrain. Suspected strongly of being chief smuggler of contraband goods into Persia now. Too clever to be caught out; anti-English chiefly because of his crooked trade dealings.
2. Haji Jassim Jodar . Violently pro-Turk resulting in extreme hostility to every thing British, openly boasts his political view.
3. Shaikh Rashid bin Muhammad Al Khalifah } First cousins of Shaikh Isa. Intriguers—
4. Shaikh Ali bin Muhammad Al Khalifah } father deposed by His Majesty's Government who appointed Shaikh Isa as Shaikh of Bahrain instead. Hostile and revengeful in consequence.
5. Shaikh Ibrahim bin Muhammad Al Khalifah }
6. Fahad bin Abdul Rahman, Amir of Always arresting British subjects apparently from sheer desire to cause trouble between Shaikh Isa and His Majesty's Government. A dangerous man.
7. Ali bin Hasain Ghomri, Amir of A man of loose character and crooked dealings. Has great influence with Shaikh Hamid bin Isa. Violently pro-Turk.

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8. Ali bin Musa Partner to (1) above and as equally a notorious arms smuggler. Well-known at Muscat.
9. Shaikh Abdallah bin Hasan Dosari See No. 13 White List. Easily led by others. Stupid rather than dangerous.
10. Haji Abdul Rahman Al Zayani Pearl merchant. Partner to Shaikh Abdallah bin Isa Al Khalifah in business. Knows Bombay well. Pro-Turk, but moderate in his views.
11. Ahmad bin Salman Ghigu Pro-Turk, former member of Majlis-ul-Urfi.
12. Shaikh Jassim bin Mehza Chief Sunni Qazi in Manama. Has very high reputation locally for charity and good works, pretends to, like English. A mischief maker of worst type.
13. Shaikh Ahmad bin Mehza Brother of (12). Narrowly escaped deportation 1905-06. Dangerous intriguer. Confidential adviser to Shaikh Isa on land question.
14. Ali bin Abdallah Financial Agent of Shaikh Isa. Ill-disposed, jealous of English interference. Reputed hand in glove with Shaikh Abdallah bin Isa Al Khalifah, C.I.E., in swindling Shaikh Isa out of half the receipt from the Customs. Hated by all for his miserly methods. Dangerous.
15. Jassim Chirawi Shaikh Isa's Private Secretary. Great friend of Shaikh's son, Abdullah. The cleverest rogue in Bahrain. Outwardly extremely polite and polished, but always endeavouring to undermine British influence with Shaikh. Close friend of Shaikh Isa's wife (the Queen). A man to be watched very closely. Engaged in deadly feud with Yusuf Kanoo, M.B.E., whom he is trying to ruin. Adopts humble attitude and pretends always he has no influence with Shaikh Isa.
16. Ahmad bin Mansur Ill-natured bigot.

Persian.

1. Haji Abdul Nabi Kazeruni Formerly used to style himself Persian Consul, Bahrain. Used to take money and issue passports till stopped by Agency. Violently anti-English. Undoubtedly engaged in smuggling contraband to Persia.
2. Abdul Nabi Germani Lately Head Clerk to the German firm of R. Wonckhaus and Company, pro-German and so pro-Turk.
3. Abdallah Germani Agent at Muharaq for the late German firm of R. Wonckhaus and Company. Poor and mischievous.
4. Mullah Shaikh Abdul Rahim Petty merchant. Was warned for giving out false war news. Pro-Turk.

Indian.

1. Mr. Muhammad Roshan Akhtar Punjabi Musalman, formerly employed as vernacular clerk in the Agency. A well educated Indian. Holds strong political views, has visited Egypt and travelled generally. Openly talks about recent Punjab riots. Reads Indian papers to Arab public, who gather to hear anti-English news in his house. Being clever with easy and assumed manner, his influence is distinctly not for good. A staunch member of the khilafat movement. Secretary to Mr. Yusuf Kanoo, M.B.E., who is afraid of him, but dare not get rid of him lest he join hands with Jassim Chirawi's party. A dangerous individual.



List of Notables who do not call on the Political Agent, Bahrain.

1. Shaikh Abdul Latif bin Sa'ad, Imam of the great mosque, Manamah.
2. Shaikh Ali (brother) pro-Turk. Influential Aalim, smaller Imam of a mosque.
3. Shaikh Hussian Musharraf, pro-Turk.
4. Mubarak al Fadhil.
5. His son Khamis.
6. Shaikh Ahmad bin Mehza. Was going to be deported 1904-05.
7. Shaikh Khalid bin Ali al Khalifah, brother of Shaikh 'Isa. Lives in Rafa'a. Old.
8. Shaikh Hamud bin Sabah al Khalifah. Lives in Rafa'a, well-read pro-Turk.
9. Shaikh Rashid bin Muhammad al Khalifah, cousin of Shaikh Isa.
10. Shaikh Hamad bin Muhammad al Khalifah. On bad terms with Shaikh.
11. Ali bin Abdullah, Shaikh 'Isa's financial agent, influential (came once), ill-disposed.
12. Shaikh Abdul Wahhab bin Hajji Zaiyani, pro-Turk (came once).
13. Shaikh 'Isa bin Rashid, bigoted Aalim, Imam of Jumrah, Muharraq.
14. Shaikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Qazi of al Hidd.

5. *Action proposed to improve on the situation.* (a). To meet and defeat these various difficulties, an energetic and open handed policy is immediately imperative. For in my opinion with so much cheap sentimentality at large in the world to-day, sue to catch phrases used for political purposes both during the world war and throughout the period of the Armistice, men's minds, especially those of orientals, are apt to fasten on *unrealities* rather than on the facts of the outcome of the world conflagration. These ephemeral ideas are greedily fastened on to by the astute Arab mind and especially by those unfriendly to us, and if British prestige is not to suffer, I submit a change of manner in dealing with these people is essential. And the primary duty of a Political Officer in these serious times is to break away from the fetters of the past and enter a wider and freer sphere of political thought lest British domination or control appear weak-kneed and sentimental. Added to this the general upset due to the war, the doubts and uncertainties, propaganda and dislocation of trade with its necessary hardship necessitates infusing energy and wideness of vision into our work in order to lead minds unbalanced by recent events into same channels.

(b) *A closer touch with individuals.* who have the least influence in educating public opinion, with the closest possible study of their individuality and especially, if hostile, their reasons for hostility. The Political Officer must be the doctor of his charge and know accurately the medicine required for each of his patients. It is impossible for the senior political officers to have leisure to do this except in the case of men of real importance, but so well should they be sured by their junior lieutenants that the exact tune and mentality of any particular place can be clearly and accurately sounded. I must be pardoned if I appear to generalize, I am writing a note on Bahrein and the mainland under it, (in a junior sense) and I purposely write at length so that one's superior officers may themselves feel the atmosphere as I feel it, and as I am about to ask for support, to give my fullest reasoning. I have started, therefore, a list of every important and fairly important personage in the place. I intend to meet them frequently to study them individually. A short visit of a few hours may easily change an enemy into a friend. I need not emphasise this aspect of political dealing that gained an Empire a hundred years ago, but has greatly fallen into disuse to our disadvantage, mainly through pressure of office work. To the above end I have set apart four days in each week for calling purposes. The hours selected are from 5-30 P.M. to 7 P.M. between sunset prayer and the Arab's dinner hour.



(c) *Entertainment and open handedness* is an essential, and I intend to hold at homes to the gentry of the place, where rumours may be corrected, and minds enlarged by social intercourse. The Political Officer must be the school-master of public opinion and thought. Our opponents in the past have robbed us of many things by these means, in future we must deny this to them. The King's birthday, New Year's day, etc., etc., must be celebrated in good style and made an occasion of entertainment on a suitable scale.

(d) *The public.* The small shopkeeper, the man earning a small livelihood, must be equally studied and considered, especially our own subjects and protected persons, he must feel his position not only in law suits and public matters, but also in his private life, and small hurts and pleasures, so that his citizenship becomes something to him. I have, therefore, instituted a weekly (Monday) Darbar or Majlis at which all, or any of the above, are free to come and will be served with light refreshment to take away shyness and reserve. They will be encouraged to speak their minds, and if immediate action can be taken, it will be taken before them. Through this channel I hope firstly to gain confidence and information, and secondly to set an example to the Ruler and his people.

(e) *Education.*—The Political Officer cannot hope to educate in its literal sense, yet education on sound lines is essential if the present ignorance is to be rectified. I hope to carry through my predecessor's proposal to have a school for British subjects and protected persons. But it must be under the supervision of the Political Officer.

(f) *Health.*—The political importance of this subject cannot be overestimated, or its means for progress denied. Much prejudice will have to be ridden down, the Ruler in particular will have to be gradually weaned to the idea that a clean tidy city is in every way preferable to a dirty one. This duty I have taken upon myself and hope to be able to report results before long.

(g) *Reward, for services* rendered either to ourselves or to the community, should receive frequent recognition and I can *not emphasize* too strongly the enormous influence these have on the Arab mind. While not cheapening the higher decorations and distinctions, we may by a generous distribution of the less imposing ones gain many friends and encourage honest endeavour. Often have I heard the Arab cry that he has served faithfully 10 or 20 years, but has received nothing, while his less deserving but intriguing brother has been rewarded in some incomprehensible manner.

(h) *Presents* have their great value and are fully appreciated by Arabs, and are a *sine qua non* among themselves. I do not deny that we have and do give presents, but a judicious increase in this respect will help us greatly. Foreign firms were very generous in this respect, with excellent results to themselves, and we as a Government should be no less generous.

(i) *Letters of appreciation* or thanks are treasured and have their weight, and occasional letters from the Senior Political Officer go a very long way to cementing a friendship. An instance of this I saw only last week when in public Darbar Sheikh Abdul Latif al Dosari of Budaiyeh pulled out a black edged letter written him by Sir Percy Cox, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., on the occasion of the late King Edward's death. He paraded this letter with a great show and obviously placed a very high value on it. He insisted on reading it over twice to his audience.

(j) *Intelligence.*—Even in time of peace is of the utmost importance both as a means of forestalling troubles and difficulties and gauging the trend of events. The information thus gained might be centralized in Baghdad and would yield important results. I propose in future supplying the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, and to the Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, with a short weekly report that will, I hope, give information that gradually may be of use, under the headings *Military trade, localities, individuals, public opinion.*

For secret service work I require Rs. 2,000 per annum. As my allotment here is fixed and I have no funds to meet such a charge, I trust Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, will grant me this sum from funds at his disposal for 1920.



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Summary of matters to be taken in hand for improving general tone.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| (a) Electric light | Capital promised. Baghdad asked to supply engine but later failed. Enquiries being made India for estimates. |
| (b) School | Subscriptions promised. Teachers asked for from Baghdad, general arrangements well forward. |
| (c) Water supply | This will have to await until India or Baghdad can supply pipes. It is most urgent measure. |
| (d) Pearl Button Plant | Enquiries being made. |
| (e) Bank | Greatly desired by local merchants awaiting sanction by Government of India to allow export of silver. Eastern Bank willing open branch. |
| (f) Darbar | Arranged weekly on Mondays. |
| (g) Visit to gentry | Started—Car wanted. |
| (h) Information | Funds being asked for from Civil Commissioner. |
| (i) Honours and Rewards | For consideration of Civil Commissioner. |
| (j) Letters of thanks | For consideration of Civil Commissioner. |
| (k) Newspaper | All ready to start on conclusion of peace. |

Note.—Reference (g). Shaikh Isa has imported a car and also Shaikh Abdullah, his son, roads are being improved in consequence, and with a car at one's disposal one will now be able to go over the whole island.

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